THE PAX CINEMANA: FILM AND THE PURSUIT OF PEACE, 1914-1939

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

HISTORY

DECEMBER 2017

By

Alex Holowicki

Dissertation Committee:

James Kraft, Chairperson

David Cohen

Margot Henriksen

Fabio López Lázaro

Michael Shapiro

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to many individuals for their support over the years. At the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, I had the pleasure of working with a group of excellent scholars whose attention and feedback helped me finish this study and achieve my professional goals. I would like to extend my appreciation to James Kraft for helping me grow as a writer and historian. Without his dependable counsel, I could not have completed this academic journey. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Margot Henriksen for her insight and careful critiques. Thank you as well to Fabio López Lázaro, David Cohen, and Michael Shapiro for expanding my understanding of history and what is possible in academia.

To all of my friends and colleagues, thank you for your company and advice. Our regular discussions both inside and outside the classroom played a tremendous role in shaping my outlook on this project and education in general. Working in the Department of History was made all the more rewarding on account of your friendship. In addition, thank you to all of my students at Mānoa and Maui College for keeping me engaged and grounded.

A special thank you to Brian Crandall, my friend and fellow cinephile, for always reading my work and providing original assessment. I look forward to future collaborations.

Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge my family for their unwavering support, generosity, and guidance. To my parents, Jan and Joe, thank you for championing my path and always inspiring me to be a better person. To my brother, Kris, thank you for a lifetime of camaraderie and motivation. To my Aunt Marsha and Grandfather, thank you for encouraging me to pursue my goals. Lastly, to Kate Belanger, my life partner and best friend, thank you for putting everything into perspective and making it all worthwhile.

Abstract

Between 1914 and 1939, the role of film in fostering international peace and understanding was a mainstream discussion within all facets of film production and exhibition. Of course, utopian ideals have always surrounded film and new technologies. As a result of the unprecedented violence that characterized World War I, however, the enthusiasm for cinema's ability to prevent another global catastrophe proved exceptional. Idealist filmmakers in the United States and Europe not only reflected on their liberal ideology, but also developed a loose infrastructure to support their lofty ambitions. Though many historians have long dismissed the peace efforts of the interwar period as little more than naïve activism, this study argues that cinema made tangible contributions to international business, law, education, and organization. These ambitions have received little scholarly attention to date. Though there is a large body of work that examines film's critical role in war efforts, few scholars have tackled its significance to peace movements. Consequently, this dissertation traces the development of "peacekeeping cinema," an international initiative that encouraged the making of motion pictures as a means to generate empathy between divergent societies. The ability to see the lived experiences of "other" peoples, supporters insisted, would help remediate the effects of World War I and prevent global conflict. By surveying the peacekeeping activities of diverse filmmakers and organizations, this dissertation articulates how communities in the United States and Europe interpreted peace and it attempts to shed new light on the relationship between film and diplomacy.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

On October 23, 1923, Will Hays—the head of the recently created Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA)—returned to his office in Washington, D.C. after a six-week tour of England and its film industry. As a guest of Ambassador George Harvey, Hays mingled freely with politicians, filmmakers, and studio executives. He visited London theaters and conversed regularly with avid moviegoers. The highlight of the trip, according to Hays, involved arranging an early screening of the soon-to-be blockbuster *Little Old New York* (1923) for a small audience that had included the Duke of Marlborough. It is tempting to treat the event as little more than a casual holiday. However, Hays' seemingly insignificant jaunt around England actually revealed a critical development in the perceived utility of motion pictures. In his official report to his staff, Hays reflected on his deep conviction about "the importance of motion pictures as an instrument of international amity."[1] Describing the trip as something akin to a eureka moment, Hays insisted that "the international understanding of the peoples of the world … will be brought about by the right kind of American motion pictures."[2]

As president of the MPPDA, Hays' official task centered on cleaning up and purifying the image of the motion picture industry after the highly-publicized Virginia Rappe-Fatty Arbuckle scandal. The alleged rape and murder of model-actress Virginia Rappe by silent film comedian Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle—who a jury later acquitted of any wrongdoing—enforced Hollywood's growing reputation as a cesspool of sin, excess, and sexual perversion, creating concern for the federal government. Responsible for "establishing and maintaining the highest possible moral standard in the motion picture industry," Hays, a devout Presbyterian and

[1] Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 369.
[2] "Will Hays Returns from Trip Abroad," *Motion Picture News*, October 27, 1923, 1979.

committed Republican, was forced to perform a careful balancing act between the interests of business, politics, and art.[3] Today, Hays' name is virtually synonymous with the controversial Motion Picture Production Code, a series of content guidelines that Hollywood filmmakers and studios were pressured to follow in the years between 1930 and 1968 in order to avoid government intervention. However, attaching Hays solely to censorship activities, as most scholars have done, belies his role in articulating the widely cherished belief in motion pictures' ability to foster international peace and understanding both during and after World War I.

In the early 1920s, Hays was busy laying the foundation for what one of his colleagues dubbed the "Pax Cinemana," or Cinematic Peace. Hays adopted this play on the notion of the *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace)—a designation used to characterize the centuries of peaceful and prosperous Roman imperial rule beginning with the reign of Caesar Augustus—somewhat in jest.[4] Nevertheless, the term embodied far more than clever wordplay. It represented Hays' desire to unite the American motion picture industry and steer it toward his vision of global peacekeeping. Throughout the 1920s, Hays routinely cited cinema's ability to end war and international tension. "The organized movie industry in America," he told a cheering audience aboard a transatlantic passenger liner in 1928, "will use the movies for promotion of international sympathy in an earnest endeavor to create world peace."[5]

Of course, the historical record is littered with countless examples of naïve and manipulative political and economic leaders carelessly using vague notions of world peace to further personal agendas. It has become a cliché and forces scholars to question the sincerity of Hays' comments. Still, Hays was not known for exaggeration or sarcasm. Supporters and critics

[3] "Ultimatum by Hays to Purify Movies," *The New York Times,* June 5, 1922, 15.
[4] Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 340.
[5] "Hays Sees Movies as World Peace Aid," *Prescott Evening Courier*, May 11, 1928, 5.

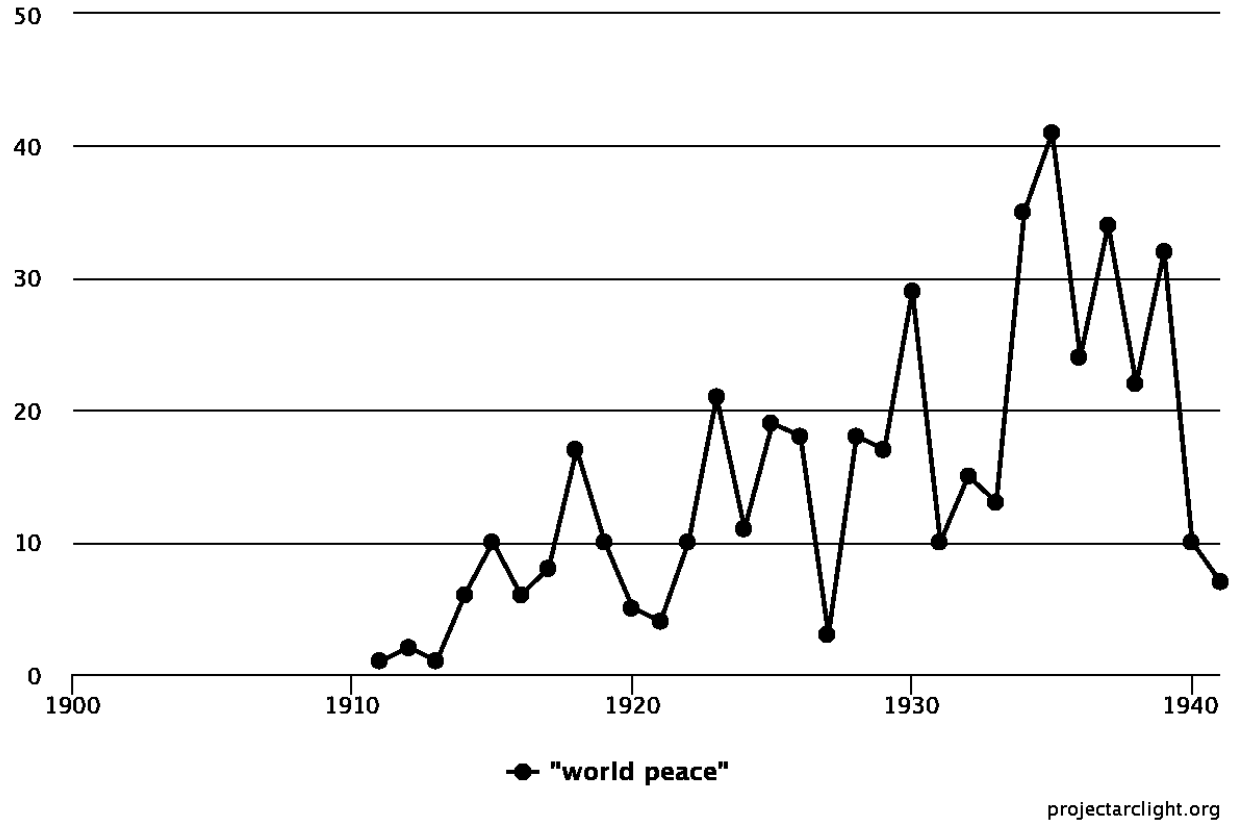
both noted that he was "uniquely an American" due to his unwavering honesty and forthright demeanor.[6] What made Hays' comments significant were their genuineness. He believed legitimately in the peacekeeping power of motion pictures. Hays was nostalgic for the decade before World War I, a fleeting period he admitted he had taken for granted, a time when he "honestly believed that war as a world factor was a thing of the past."[7] He knew that motion pictures could not turn back the clock, but they could, he figured, make a warless world a reality. It is essential to note, however, that Hays' lofty ideas were not novel and were in fact firmly in sync with the wider treatment of motion pictures after the horrors of World War I. Influential politicians as diverse as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Winston Churchill, the Grand Duke of Russia Alexander Mikhailovich, and the King of Siam Prajadhipok, had all endorsed "the screen as an incentive to world peace."[8]

By 1918, the importance of motion pictures in international relations had become a point of discussion within all facets of film production and exhibition. Hailing from professional, amateur, governmental, activist, and philanthropic circles, thousands of filmmakers came to see motion pictures as the best tool to promote cooperation between diverse nations and societies. An array of important yet overlooked primary source materials, including but not limited to the *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, International Review of Educational Cinematography, Moving Picture World, The Educational Screen,* and *Modern Screen,* reveals much about how commentators expressed the peacekeeping potential of motion pictures. In fact, the following graph demonstrates how often world peace was discussed or referenced in these industry-leading publications between 1900 and 1941.

---

[6] "Will H. Hays—An Appreciation," *Motion Picture Daily,* March 9, 1954, 1-4.
[7] Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 63.
[8] See: "You are Cordially Invited," *Screenland*, June, 1930, 130. "Here and There," *International Review of Educational Cinematography*, January, 1930, 103.

Figure 1.



Before 1911, world peace was never mentioned in the extant literature. However, because of World War I, articles discussing or referencing motion pictures and world peace flourished, with approximately fifty-nine articles published throughout the war. Though that number ebbed and flowed after 1919, one can see a gradual increase until the number of publications peaked in 1935, with approximately forty-one articles. When World War II broke out in Europe in 1939, the number of articles quickly plummeted, diminishing to just seven in 1941. All in all, there were nearly four-hundred articles published between 1919 and 1939 that discussed or referenced motion pictures and world peace. These figures provide a sense of how prominently the politics of peacekeeping were embedded in discussions of motion pictures.[9]

[9] The data above was created using Project Arclight, a research platform developed at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and Concordia University to study trends evident in over two million pages of film and media-related

Of course, vague utopian ideals have always surrounded new technologies. However, after World War I, many Americans enthusiastically embraced cinema's ability to prevent another global catastrophe. Filmmakers and activists in the United States and Europe did not merely reflect on their liberal ideology, they actually developed a loose infrastructure to support their lofty ambitions. This dissertation examines not only the emergence and expansion of the idea that cinema could aid peace efforts, but also the actual attempts to make a warless world real. This study moves beyond the restrictions of intellectual history and explores those individuals and institutions that put musings into action. It traces the interrelated artistic, business, and political forces that drove thousands of filmmakers and activists to embrace cinema as an instrument of justice and global peacekeeping between 1914 and 1939. In short, it provides a history of the Pax Cinemana.

Advocates of the Pax Cinemana, also known as "peacekeeping filmmakers," did not promote cinema solely for entertainment purposes. They figured it was meant to *do* something, specifically cultivate international understanding and diplomatic harmony. It is important to note that the designation "peacekeeping filmmaker" cannot be found in the historical evidence. There were many who identified as both filmmakers and proponents of peace, but had never adopted the title formally; it is an original moniker that this dissertation applies to a diverse and even contradictory body of filmmakers who had aligned their craft with diplomatic ambitions. They operated under the assumption that the ability to *see* the lived experiences of "other" peoples would prevent another global conflict. Hays was one of many individuals within the film

publications. The publications consist of trade journals, fan magazines, and newspapers scanned by the Library of Congress and Media History Digital Library.

industry who equated seeing with understanding and exclaimed regularly that "when men understand each other, they do not hate, and when they do not hate, they do not make wars."[10]

The peacekeeping cinema of the interwar years has received remarkably little scholarly attention. Though many scholars have examined film's critical role in war efforts, few have tackled film's significance during peacetime. This work contributes to an emerging body of scholarship that defines and explains slippery notions of "peace," "peacekeeping," and "peacetime." These concepts, under-theorized in historical literature, are too often taken at face value. Orthodox surveys of the twentieth century tend to detail violent acts of war and revolution in exhausting detail; however, periods of relative peace rarely receive the same critical assessment. The fact that historians have pegged the years between 1918 and 1939 as the "interwar period" makes this explicitly clear.

Heeding the nuanced interpretations of peace put forth in the works of David Cortright, Cecilia Lynch, Martin Ceadel, and Charles Chatfield, this study articulates how societies in the United States and Europe conceived of peace between 1914 and 1939. It explores the eclectic and often contradictory responses to a series of pertinent questions: What is peace? Who is responsible for implementing and maintaining peace? What is the role of international bodies and organizations? Is American world hegemony a safeguard or threat to peace? After World War I, policymakers and the public wrestled with these questions routinely. Because an international consensus for "peace" was never reached, this study characterizes it not as a fixed concept, but rather as an ongoing struggle between various states and publics. Peace did not entail the absence of conflict; it was a conflict that required continuous analysis and discussion.

[10] "The Road Back—Does it Lead to Peace?" *Cinema Progress*, August 1937, 3.

What was certain, however, was that motion pictures would play an integral part. The relationship between cinema and the *process* of peace is at the heart of this study.

The Pax Cinemana was an informal initiative steered by three interrelated, yet not entirely synonymous, philosophical traditions that resurfaced with gusto after World War I, idealism, pacifism, and internationalism. The war had shaken but not overturned the geo-political status quo, and most belligerent nations in the war, including the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany, believed that the liberal democratic order would prevail. As a result, many State Departments, mostly those of Allied Powers, embraced idealist policymaking throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Idealism was bipartisan and referred to a handful of general assumptions regarding the relationship between states. First, it assumed that humans are altruistic beings steered by a common good. Theoretically, the common good extended beyond national boundaries and encouraged concern for the welfare of others, regardless of race, class, and national origin. Idealism embraced the role of morality in statecraft and insisted that war was never inevitable. In fact, idealism posited that war stemmed not from evil individuals or nations, but rather from xenophobic institutions and policies that catered solely to domestic interests. In order to end war, idealists insisted, belligerent states needed to strengthen international organizations collectively.

One effective way to measure the influence of idealism between the world wars is to examine the rise and activity of the multitude of international organizations that emerged in tandem with the League of Nations. No enterprise represented the institutionalization of idealism better than the League, a groundbreaking intergovernmental body that assumed a new world order was emerging as a reaction to the unprecedented violence of World War I. The collective brainchild of American President Woodrow Wilson, British diplomat Robert Cecil, and South

African Prime Minister Jan Smuts, the League represented one of the seminal achievements of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. As the League grew throughout the 1920s, it directly and indirectly encouraged the spread of both types of international organization: international governmental organizations (IGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

Global peace, idealists assumed, would stem from the mutual cooperation between the world's IGOs and INGOs, thus creating greater interdependence between states and eliminating the drive for war. IGOs referred to organizations composed of sovereign states or official government actors. IGOs were held together by a treaty or charter that detailed the bylaws and goals that the member states had agreed to uphold. Throughout the early twentieth century, dozens of IGOs emerged, most of which were formal appendages or affiliates of the League of Nations. INGOs, on the other hand, were far more diverse and were commonly defined as any international organization that was not established by an agreement among governments. This vague definition is a testament to the fact that INGOs represented an extremely diverse spectrum of groups from business and labor organizations to social clubs. Some of the more notable INGOs include the Red Cross and the International Olympic Committee, while some of the lesser known include the Tug of War International Federation and the International Euchre Association.

The number of international organizations had steadily grown throughout the late nineteenth century, and by 1900, there were over 200 active organizations, most of which revolved around the ambitions of imperial powers.[11] Originally, they had three primary functions: standardize units of measurement; standardize telegraph and postal rates; and prevent

[11] John Boli and George M. Thomas, *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1875* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 14.

the spread of disease.[12] Despite nationalist tensions, policymakers of the imperial powers realized that some degree of transnational dialogue was essential to stability and self-preservation. World War I crippled the activities of nearly every existing IGO and INGO and halted the emergence of new ones. And yet, by 1920, after the formation of the League of Nations, they experienced a considerable comeback with numbers totaling over 800 by the end of the decade. [13] In most cases, their creators laced their organizations with lofty ideals about world peace and the common good. Evidently, idealism contributed to a revival of an international ethic that emerged in the late nineteenth century only to be temporarily interrupted by global warfare. In the following years, approximately fifty international organizations originated annually until the Great Depression limited their formation to about thirty foundings per year.[14] But, it is important to note that the slow growth of international organizations throughout the 1930s was primarily economic and did not represent an ideological shift from international thinking.

The history of the Pax Cinemana speaks pointedly to these patterns and trends. Of the approximately 1,000 international organizations that emerged throughout the interwar period, at least twelve of them had formally adopted motion pictures and global peacekeeping as their central initiative. Notable examples include the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IECI), the International Committee for the Diffusion of Arts and Literature through the Cinema (CIDALC), and the International Union of Amateur Film Makers (UNICA). Though this might appear like a modest sum, it is important to note that approximately 700 other international organizations also committed to securing the postwar peace had adopted motion pictures in some

[12] Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 10.
[13] Boli and Thomas, 14.
[14] Boli and Thomas, 23.

capacity to help aid their efforts. The majority of these organizations revolved around educational and legal pursuits and stressed the need to cultivate international understanding. Apparently, the idealist vision to institutionalize an agenda for peace manifested itself in many of the international organizations that flourished after the war. Furthermore, the United States represented one of the primary regions for IGO and INGO development, proving that United States citizens were eager to partake in international bodies for global peace, despite the fact that United States Congressional representatives refrained from supporting the United States' membership in the League of Nations.

From a theoretical and philosophical standpoint, many Americans wholeheartedly embraced idealism. Even the League of Nations' harshest critics agreed with its central aims. However, they questioned the League's ability to implement its lofty ambitions in an affordable, practical manner. They feared that the United States' membership in the League might prove costly and undermine the more immediate interests of the nation. Nevertheless, the United States played a critical role in rejuvenating and boosting a preexisting enthusiasm for international organization. This is significant because, typically, between the wars, historians portray the Unites States as an isolated nation still repulsed by World War I and then also mired in the turmoil of the Great Depression. Americans insisted on avoiding entanglements in what international observers widely considered European conflicts. This interpretation of the past holds much explanatory power but it does not fully elucidate the complexity of America's position on the world stage after World War I.

Contrary to most scholarship that focuses on isolationism, this study illustrates that thousands of influential Americans had not become jaded and instead actively refused to abandon the pursuit of a universal peace. World War I only disrupted the proliferation of

idealism, and its severity actually contributed to idealism's renaissance. The idealist filmmakers who comprised the Pax Cinemana by and large wanted to protect and promote global democracy and capitalism—not tear it down, as would later communist and fascist movements. As a result, they were based predominantly in Allied nations, like the United States, and usually had white, middle to upper-class backgrounds. They were both religious and secular pacifists who shared a cosmopolitan vision for the post war world. Their ambitions echoed the prediction that President Woodrow Wilson—the most influential idealist of the twentieth century—had made to Americans in 1917: "The tragic events of the thirty months of vital turmoil through which we have just passed have made us citizens of the world. There can be no turning back."[15] Peacekeeping filmmakers accepted the increasingly globalized nature of modern life and applied their craft to the cultivation of pacifism and internationalism.

The activities of peacekeeping filmmakers did not emerge in a vacuum and took seriously time-honored interpretations of progress. Echoing the ambitions of the peace advocacy groups that thrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, peacekeeping filmmakers denounced the assumption that continuous warfare was an inevitable facet of modern life. They heeded the pacifist traditions that sprang up as a reaction to Euro-America's earlier imperial and colonial expansion. Like the reemergence of idealism in statecraft after World War I, pacifism also drew inspiration from its turn-of-the-century roots. In 1900, there were several hundred major peace advocacy organizations working throughout the world. Many of these held large-scale assemblies that attracted representatives from dozens of states. The Universal Peace Congress, for example, championed idealism as a mainstream strand of political thought and helped introduce the ideology of pacifism into modern policymaking. Pacifism, as it was

[15] Woodrow Wilson, "Second Inaugural Address," 5 March 1917. Available at: Millercenter.org (accessed December 11, 2015).

understood, was hardly passive or theoretical; adherents stressed a high level of civic engagement and provided pragmatic platforms for preventing war. Pacifists were the architects of The Hague Peace Conference of 1899 and 1908, which laid a precedent for the establishment of international law, legislation, and education throughout the interwar period. New transnational bodies, like the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the Institute of International Education, stressed the existence of and the need to enforce universal "human rights," a designation that did not fit easily within preexisting legal discourse.

Pacifists designed an array of initiatives aimed at curbing the tension created through global capitalism and imperialism. Peacekeeping filmmakers were pacifists; they promoted the strengthening of international law and organizations, the opening of national borders, and the spread of liberal democracy. Many, but certainly not all, were based in the United States and Western Europe and had reasonably affluent origins. By 1930, pacifist filmmakers had become ubiquitous within all international bodies championing human rights, including the League of Nations. In mainstream discussions over the benefits of internationalism, pacifists played a key role.[16]

Though this dissertation is predominantly a work of American history, it also seeks to contribute to the growing body of scholarship concerning the complexity of internationalism, particularly liberal internationalism. The works of Glenda Sluga, Patricia Clavin, Akira Iriye, and Daniel Laqua, for example, demonstrate how the internationalist turn after World War I marked a revival of sentiments and activities from the late nineteenth century.[17] However, their work also

[16] Though most pacifists of the era identified as "internationalists," not all internationalists identified as "pacifists."
[17] See: Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, ed., *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Daniel Laqua, ed., *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

reveals how advocates for internationalism never came to represent a uniform body committed to a cohesive ideology. Instead, this recent body of research proves internationalism reflected a diverse array of conflicting capitalist, communist, fascist, and feminist visions for the postwar order. In two groundbreaking books, an edited collection (*Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*) and a monograph (*Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*), Glenda Sluga traces the history of internationalism in all of its competing incarnations. She illustrates effectively that internationalism and nationalism were not opposites, but rather complementary forces that operated under the same basic assumptions about human nature. Understanding how nationalist sentiment was implicit in liberal internationalism sheds light on how peacekeeping filmmakers interpreted their responsibility to nation states.

The relationship between cinema and the nation was thus undoubtedly varied. Throughout the interwar years, the nation was accepted widely as the apex of human organization. Nations were considered "natural" communities and consequently the rightful political unit for each and every culture in the world. However, increased global integration after World War I challenged the permanence of the nation-state. In the pursuit of international understanding, many peacekeeping filmmakers promoted the "global village" while simultaneously reaffirming what it meant to be American, German, French, English, or Japanese. The politics of "picturing" nations and the world as cohesive units mirror the observations made by Sluga. Operating under the assumption that peace would stem from a greater familiarity between nations, peacekeeping filmmakers in the United States and Europe both contributed to the cultural expression of nation-building agendas and challenged the hegemony of the nation-state by promoting visual conceptions of a monolithic "global culture." The tension between the two reveals an irony that is explored throughout this dissertation: the same utopian

interpretations of internationalism and technology that many filmmakers assumed were essential to peacekeeping would also play a role in sparking the Second World War. In this sense, the Pax Cinemana was a mostly transatlantic phenomenon comprised of contesting international ideas, which both legitimated and undermined national allegiances in the United States and Europe. For peacekeeping filmmakers, the cinema was the principal theater—figuratively and literally—to negotiate with internationalist thought. Although contemporary critics might consider their ambitions naive and impractical in light of more recent global conflicts and the role that motion pictures played in promoting them, dismissing their goals and achievements enforces the misconception that motion pictures were little more than trivial amusements or propaganda tools in the period under study.

Historians have typically depicted film during the interwar years as "escapist." Celebrated historian Alan Brinkley, for example, argued that cinemas provided poor and downtrodden people a way to dissociate from the drudgery of their daily lives. Stressing the financial hardships of the Great Depression, Brinkley credits popular films, such as *King Kong* (1933) and *Treasure Island* (1934), as a means to forget lived reality and enter a temporary dream world where beautiful starlets preen in front of exotic backdrops. Brinkley, like many other historians, attributed the box office success of these and other films to their sedating qualities. Such explanations hold merit but they also undermine the intelligence of audiences and social commentaries that deeper readings of these films have revealed. Though Hollywood and other professional film industries continued to release reflexive films for apolitical audiences, thousands of others looked to cinema as a creative and practical source for justice and global peacekeeping.

Though this study provides some necessary theoretical dimensions to peace and peacekeeping, it does not operate under the assumption that peace is the opposite of war, or that peace is "normal" and war is "exceptional."[18] As World War I shattered the traditional barrier between the civilian and military fronts, it also complicated temporal understandings of warfare. Though historians conventionally cite November 11, 1918 as the end of World War I, the psychological, economic, and cultural impacts proved ongoing, making it difficult to periodize the conflict neatly. Moreover, the unequal peace established at Versailles placed responsibility for the war almost entirely on Germany, a decision that encouraged future Nazification and thus World War II. As a result, even though this study focuses specifically on the years from 1914 to 1939, a period when filmmakers used their skills to contribute actively to the peacekeeping effort, it is intended to serve as a complement to the large body of literature that explores film's contribution to orthodox readings of World War I.

"War films," or films that overtly depict armed conflict, are at the center of most scholarship that examines the relationship between cinema and World War I. Many important works, such as Paul Virilio's *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* and Leslie Midkiff Debauche's *Reel Patriotism: The Movies and World War I,* demonstrate effectively how motion picture and military technologies co-evolved.[19] Through a deep textual reading of war films, like *The Battle of the Somme* (1916) and *Anna Makes Artillery Shells* (1917), these authors, particularly Virilio, demonstrate how films enforced the nation-building agenda of the government. The ubiquitous nationalism of the war forced filmmakers around the world to articulate what made their works uniquely "American," "British," "German," "French,

[18] Like "nationalism" and "internationalism," "war" and "peace" were also interconnected phenomenon rather than inherent counterparts.

[19] Michael Paris' *The First World War and Popular Cinema* (New Brunswick: NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1999) is another important text.

"Russian," or "Japanese." The portrayal of the nation-state was exceptionally important to the peacekeeping filmmakers who seldom questioned its permanence as a means of political and cultural organization. Even when the dangers of nationalism had been fully realized, few people challenged the nation-state's status as the fundamental order for humanity. Fair and accurate depictions of the "nation," most supporters assumed, would be the first step in healing international diplomacy.

The healing process of the 1920s and 1930s generated a series of new war films that aligned conveniently with ambitions of peacekeeping filmmakers. For example, *The Big Parade* (1925) and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) contain themes of ambivalence and pacifism.[20] These blockbuster films of the interwar period countered the propaganda films produced during World War I and played a key role in the outreach activities of many influential anti-war groups. Instead of championing the glory of combat, these films depicted the horrors of the trenches and the psychological toll of total warfare. The war films of the interwar period echoed the pacifist political interests of the American, French, British, and German federal governments. These works promoted universal conceptions of "humanity"—a political buzzword in the 1920s and 1930s—and the need to build a family of nations. Instead of vilifying opposing forces, these films cultivated a spirit of fraternalism by depicting all soldiers, regardless of nationality, as fully-realized individuals with a common goal: to return safely to domestic life.

Though *The Big Parade* (1925) and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) actively contributed to the spread of pacifist ideas in foreign relations, most studio films never directly attempted to shape policymaking. They were theatrical pictures that embraced pacifist themes primarily for profit. *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921) and *Westfront 1918* (1930),

[20] Other films in this category include: *J'accuse!* (1919), *Westfront 1918* (1930), and *La Grande Illusion* (1937).

for example, were simply about the horrors of World War I and did little more than raise awareness of their psychological impact. In fact, these films formed part of a canon of works that has cemented the interwar period's image as an "Age of Anxiety." Nearly all of these anti-war films, particularly *Hell on Earth* (1931), embrace the innocence and transformation of young men from talented go-getters to confused and aimless soldiers. They articulated the widespread feeling of disillusionment that has long characterized popular understandings of the era. As a result, most of these anti-war studio films are not at the center of this study. The primary subjects are filmmakers and films that performed an immediate service in strengthening understandings of international citizenship. Peacekeeping filmmakers used their craft as a means to remedy post war pessimism, not validate it. Consequently, this study challenges conventional readings of the interwar years by highlighting the unfettered optimism of peace filmmakers and activists.

In order to challenge the popular conception of the interwar period, it is necessary to explain it more fully. The influential German historian Oswald Spengler perhaps best summed up the cynical climate of the postwar Western world in his seminal *The Decline of the West*. The severity of World War I, he argued, was indicative of the breakdown of Western values, attitudes, and institutions. For Spengler, all cultures and complex societies evolve like living organisms, moving between stages of birth, maturation, and death. The West, he insisted, was in its twilight years. Western hegemony and eventually Euro-America would disappear altogether in the coming years. Spengler likened Western civilization to the titular character in the German folk legend *Faust*, a man who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for infinite knowledge and power. By providing the character Faust with unprecedented magical abilities, the devil knew that an insatiable lust for pleasure would ultimately consume him. Similarly, the magical power of modern technology and industry, Spengler noted, allowed the West to colonize much of the

planet and exert an exceptional level of influence on world affairs. However, World War I demonstrated that the West had lost control of its newfound magic and was using it to destroy itself. The duality of technology is a reoccurring theme in this study: motion pictures could both aid the war effort and build a lasting peace. The Faustian interpretation of Western civilization resonated and contributed to the postwar pessimism that came to define an entire generation.

In 1926, when reflecting on the alleged cynicism growing among those who came of age during World War I, novelist Gertrude Stein famously said to Ernest Hemingway, "That's what you all are … all of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation." The "lost generation" catchphrase embodied a collection of enduring tropes that historians have used to describe the postwar demographic that had supposedly lost faith in traditional barometers of progress and success. Prior to the war, Enlightenment conceptions of history as a story of continuous advancement dominated Western thinking. However, the social and political reforms championed by Voltaire and his ilk no longer seemed to apply in a world of mustard gas and flamethrowers: contrary to conventional belief, history was *not* a steady march of progress.

The futility of the war challenged the axiomatic belief that Western culture was founded on reason and rationality, cementing Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein as the era's preeminent thinkers. Freud's ideas resonated with millions of Americans who wondered if the ambitions that defined several centuries of policymaking had amounted to anything more than mutual butchery. Such questions cultivated a new intellectual climate that trivialized the optimistic and time-honored ideas of the Romanticist and Victorian eras. Freud reduced the universal morality of humankind to animal instincts steered by subconscious sexual desires. Humans, he insisted, were hardly intelligent beings working towards a common good, they were finicky creatures motivated unknowingly by the pursuit of personal gratification. Similarly, Albert Einstein

upturned the conception of the universe created during the Scientific Revolution: space and time, he theorized, were not fixed units, but were in fact part of interconnected phenomena that shift according to positions of observers. Einstein's theory of relativity applied pointedly to the entire generation: everything that had been taken as self-evident was now "relative."

There is an enormous body of literature that explores the existential dread that loomed throughout the interwar years. The works of Paul Fussell and Modris Eksteins are perhaps the most cited and widely read—they also had the greatest impact on this study.[21] Through a deep literary analysis of the writings of Robert Graves, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Franz Kafka, Fussell and Eksteins examine the reoccurring notions fatalism, skepticism, and irony that they claim define "modern" thinking. World War I, Eksteins argues, "was the psychological turning point for modernism as a whole."[22] The loss of innocence that characterized life in the trenches, they argue, soon permeated the rest of society. Echoing Karl Marx's earlier assessment of modern life at the anniversary of the Chartist *People's Paper* in London, Fussell and Eksteins reiterate, "In our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary. … All that is solid melts into air."[23]

This widespread acceptance of "truth" as subjective, perhaps, marks the birth of the modern psyche. The cynical and ironic mood that proliferated after World War I largely rendered traditional understandings of human history obsolete. Fussell and Eksteins' observations hold much explanatory power and provide a useful framework for examining the politics of memory and representation. The "Age of Anxiety" moniker does indeed apply fittingly to the years

[21] See: *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) and *The Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989).
[22] Modris Ekstein, *The Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 4.
[23] Karl Marx, "Speech at the Anniversary of the People's Paper," in Robert C. Tucker, editor, *The Marx Engels Reader* (New York, NY: Norton, 1978), 577-578.

between 1914 and 1939. Such designations, however, strip the period of nuance and ignore the peacekeeping efforts of the thousands of individuals who genuinely embraced or tried to embrace Woodrow Wilson's prophecy that World War I was "the war to end all wars." Peacekeeping filmmakers understood that peace was not so easily won.

The large body of scholarship that treats the end of the World War I as a "modernist turn," as Fussell and Eksteins do, reduces the complexity of the era to a simple break between "traditional" and "modern." World War I did not, as historian Jay Winter argues, "neatly and surgically" leave behind the values and conventions of preceding centuries.[24] Winter's work traces the proliferation of Victorian and Romantic-era thinking in the interwar years, complicating understandings of "modernity."[25] Winter emphasizes the resurgence of utopian ideals and the influence of social movements that stressed the capacity of new technology and industry to bring about universal peace and international understanding. The Pax Cinemana was part of this utopian impulse, which brought motion pictures into formal statecraft. This marriage between motion pictures and diplomacy creates ample room to study the influence of cinema beyond the confines of the professional entertainment industry.

Until recently, films from professional entertainment industries, primarily Hollywood, and avant-garde movements have long dominated academic readings of cinema. Amateur, educational, and governmental films have received almost no scholarly attention. For the first half of the twentieth century, history was primarily a literary enterprise that favored elites and nation-states as default modes of historical analysis. The cultural turn of the 1970s and 1980s

---

[24] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 4.

[25] See: *Sites of Memory, Sites of Morning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century* (Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books, 2006).

shattered the institutional, narrow-mindedness of historical inquiry by merging history with the social sciences and encouraging interdisciplinary histories constructed from the bottom-up. However, film history has largely neglected the bottom-up trend and has instead focused on Hollywood, various national cinemas, and the politicized avant-garde—an approach similar to older histories that favored nobility and supposed "great" men and women. Peacekeeping cinema, which hails from an array of educational, governmental, diplomatic, and amateur circles, represents the neglected underside of global film culture and, consequently, deserves a rightful place in the larger canon of motion pictures.

This study benefitted from the works of a handful of scholars who have pushed the boundaries of film and media studies to include small-gauge and non-theatrical works. For example, the anthologies *Useful Cinema*, *Learning with the Lights Off: Educational Film in the United States,* and *Films that Work: Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media*, look beyond commercial cinema and examine critically the proliferation of motion pictures that informed all facets of everyday life. Since the 1890s, motion pictures increasingly moved into non-theatrical settings, like classrooms, corporate offices, factories, museums, community halls, libraries, and philanthropic institutions. By 1930, motion pictures had become a ubiquitous component of modern living. The saturation of motion pictures, these texts argue, cultivated a new kind of literacy that transformed how Euro-American societies learned and worked. Big businesses, like Shell and AT&T, adopted motion pictures as a tool to improve worker productivity while public school systems simultaneously integrated films into classroom curriculum.

Visual images gradually usurped arenas that had been traditionally reserved for the written word. Often referred to as educational or instructional films, these works were designed to inform employees, citizens, or students about everything from workplace rules to current

events. By offering a deep textual reading of these previously neglected films, these anthologies demonstrate how societies interpreted the utility and function of motion pictures. Peacekeeping films were an integral strand of educational cinema. They were often, though not entirely, non-theatrical and had the specific goal of advancing pacifism and international cooperation. This dissertation provides some clarity to the expanding discourse on educational cinema by moving away from broad surveys and honing in on only one facet of this dynamic genre.

In order to analyze peacekeeping cinema effectively, this dissertation is broken into six chapters. The opening chapter provides a case for the periodization of this dissertation by explaining precisely why the enthusiasm for cinema's ability to contribute to peace and international understanding was exceptional between 1914 and 1939. The following five chapters provide detailed case studies of the various professional, governmental, and amateur filmmaking bodies that comprised the peacekeeping cinema movement. Each of these chapters analyzes diverse and occasionally conflicting plans for achieving peace while showing that a distinct form of liberal idealism characterized all of them. The conclusion of this study traces the gradual dissolution of the peacekeeping cinema movement in the wake of World War II. The threat of fascism and Nazi aggression challenged the values and attitudes of idealist and pacifist filmmakers. As tensions mounted in Europe, many prominent filmmakers reluctantly lent their talents to the war effort. Once again, cinema proved itself to be an indispensable tool of combat. Though film would continue to play a prominent role in international diplomacy after World War II, the unfettered optimism and utopian rhetoric that had defined the peacekeeping cinema movement disappeared. However, despite the reality of another global conflagration, this dissertation suggests that the peacekeeping movement that emerged after World War I had lasting significance.

Chapter One

From Toys to Profitable Peacekeeping Tools: A Technological History of Motion Pictures

On October 25, 1913, John Bradlet—editor of the popular journal *Motion Picture News*—wrote that war was one of the major problems facing the rapidly expanding film industry. "The public is sick of war subjects on the screen," he lamented, "just as the public is sick of war between nations."[1] Unaware of the unprecedented violence that would soon engulf Europe and devastate its film industries, Bradlet predicted that cinema would become ubiquitous within institutions of international diplomacy, specifically the recently completely Peace Palace in The Hague, due to its ability to stimulate empathy between divergent peoples. For Bradlet, world peace might prove possible since the still fledgling cinema business allowed the masses to see that "war is a useless waste of valuable human lives."[2] Unlike most commentators of his era, Bradlet viewed motion pictures as the ideal teaching and learning tool. His predictions about film reflected the beginning of what would become the widespread reinterpretation of motion pictures and their potential.

Since the late 1910s, commentators increasingly referred to motion pictures not as curious novelties but as the "new printing press" and even "better than books" in disseminating knowledge.[3] Ralph Block, a producer for Paramount Studios, articulated the perceived spiritual magnitude of cinema when he argued that it had become "so peculiarly vital … that it is almost a 'mass' religion."[4] Between the world wars, the American public for the first time began to take seriously the cinema's ability to shape the status quo, which raises important questions: What

[1] John M. Bradlet, "Right off the Reel," *Motion Picture News,* October 25, 1913, 15.
[2] Bradlet, 17.
[3] "Movies Are New Form of Printing," *The New York Times*, July 21, 1923, 2.
[4] Mina Brownstein, "Cross Sections of our Dreams," *Movie Makers,* April 1927, 7.

happened? Why did the discourse surrounding cinema shift so dramatically? How did motion pictures quickly change from a side-street charm to an indispensable form of media?

To answer these and related questions, this chapter provides a technological history of motion pictures from the 1880s to the 1930s. However, it does not delve into the "black box" of motion picture technology. Instead it explores the symbolic role of motion pictures in American society and culture, and how Americans' perception of that role changed according to technological developments in the motion picture industry, including the emergence of the Hollywood studio system and the advent of sound. The emergence of the studio system has generated an extensive body of scholarship. What is missing from these studies, however, is a detailed analysis of how the expansion of this system depended on the success of films with explicit anti-war messages, specifically *The Big Parade* (1925) and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930). Doing so helps explain why Bradlet would have felt compelled to make such claims. His lofty ideas did not emerge in a vacuum. They were on the avant-garde crest of a wave of technological advances that would lift motion pictures after World War I.

Bradlet was infatuated not only with the potential power of motion pictures, but also their physical makeup. It is important to note that when considering the influence of popular cinema, motion pictures, which relied on cameras, projectors, and other machinery, were one of the most successful technical artifacts of the modern era. However, scholars rarely analyze film as a technological phenomenon. And yet, for Bradlet and other filmmakers, world peace hinged almost entirely on this still new innovation. He believed that motion pictures possessed inherent cosmopolitan ideals, which if properly nurtured could usher in an era of unequivocal global harmony and prosperity. In other words, he linked the fruition of his international vision with the march of technological breakthroughs. He and other supporters of the Pax Cinemana adopted

utopian perceptions of technology, which can be viewed and studied in numerous publications, like *Motion Picture News* and *Motion Picture Daily*. From a broader perspective, then, his treatment of motion pictures reflected the larger trends in a technological history explained so well by Thomas Hughes, a path-breaking scholar in the field who covered the experience of "technological enthusiasm."[5]

Hughes saw Americans' appetite for new technologies as the driving socio-cultural force in shaping twentieth-century patterns of life. His work examines the advent and evolution of wide-scale technological systems in communication, transportation, production, and the military that came to define the United States' national character and identity. Beginning in World War I, motion pictures played an essential role in the expansion of these technological systems. Inventors, industrial scientists, engineers, and system builders, who, according to Hughes, have been the true "makers" of the modern world, increasingly found use for motion pictures in their work. As a result, they became part of a popular technological culture instilled with a sense of limitless power and infinite potential that defined the modern American experience. The Pax Cinemana epitomized technological enthusiasm and its most outspoken supporters, like Bradlet, believed global understanding required American technological ingenuity and innovation.

This opening chapter traces the utopian rhetoric that gradually surrounded motion pictures and the motion picture industry as they became integrated into the makeup of daily life. It explores the various ways that popular news outlets interpreted motion pictures in order to explain why filmmakers legitimately celebrated seemingly trivial devices as nothing short of saviors of humanity. Utopian ideals have always surrounded motion pictures, as they have surrounded most inventions around the turn of the century. It was not uncommon for "peep

[5] Thomas P. Hughes, *American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970* (New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 1989), 2. In 1990, *American Genesis* was selected as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

show" promoters and attention-seeking journalists to sensationalize motion picture technologies. "The invention of these instruments," one overzealous commentator stated in 1896, "may be said to constitute an epoch-making event in the world's progress. … The invention constitutes a real division between the dark and the enlightened periods of the world's growth."[6] Advertisements similarly celebrated everything from household appliances to cosmetics as unmitigated indications of progress. The motion picture was simply one of many modern trinkets that reportedly shaped modern times. And despite Bradlet's lofty convictions, the public did not embrace his hollow rhetoric widely.

Most reporters and diplomats before World War I had treated cinema as little more than a simple medium of entertainment. News outlets characterized the first motion picture devices, such as the phenakistoscope, praxinoscope, and zoetrope, as mere curiosities.[7] These simple, hand-operated devices usually consisted of a slotted wheel or cylinder through which one could view the rapid succession of animated images. The illusion of movement appealed greatly to children who lovingly embraced what was usually little more than a brief sequence of an animal sketch in action. "Few toys," one journalist noted, "were more popular in mid-Victorian nurseries."[8] As the primary sales demographic for these "toys," children and their tastes steered the content of early motion pictures, which helped confirm their reputation as a fleeting fad of little consequence. However, as photographic technology advanced, a handful of independent inventors took an interest in the scientific implications of motion pictures.

---

[6] "Edison's Kinetoscope: A Wonderful Achievement in Rapid Photography," *The Sydney Mail,* February 15, 1896, 12.

[7] See: "Edison's Wonderful Vitascope," *Daily Mail and Empire,* August 29, 1896, 5. "Origin of Moving Pictures," *The Milwaukee Sentinel,* October 10, 1911, 4. Proehl Haller Jaklon, "The Screen: Its Amazing History," *The Polk County News,* July 1, 1926, 2.

[8] E.V. Lucas, "Cinema History," *The New York Times*, 5 August 1923, 112.

Fully aware of the limits of hand-drawn moving pictures, Eadweard Muybridge, Thomas Edison, and Etienne-Jules Marey turned their attention to capturing live action scenes. By developing cameras with high-speed shutters, they were able to photograph multiple frames per second. Once processed, the images could be fastened to a wheel, which, when spun, created the illusion of movement. Operating under the same principle as a children's flip book, devices like the Zoopraxiscope, Kinetoscope, and Mutoscope laid the foundation for cinematography and garnered the immediate attention of those interested in the scientific study of movement.

The camera's gaze initially catered to naturalists. Galloping horses, leaping cats, budding flowers, and the like all came under the inquisitive eye of those hoping to understand the nuances of animal and plant behavior. The images were of keen interest not only to zoologists and botanists but also to aviation engineers like the Wright Brothers, who credited Etienne-Jules Marey's photographs of birds in flight with inspiring the design of their first aircraft. Moreover, surgeons and anatomy experts found use for motion pictures during procedures and clinical trials. The ability to exhibit complicated surgical operations created new avenues for teaching and training doctors.[9] By 1910, motion pictures could be found in nearly every major research institution in the world. "The time has now arrived," one reporter noted, "when the equipment of a hospital and scientific laboratory is as incomplete without a moving picture apparatus as it would be without clinical instruments and test tubes."[10] Motion pictures permitted a new window into the inner-workings of the natural world, which appealed greatly to esoteric scientists but little to the wider public. Reporters noted the practical and scholastic qualities of motion pictures, but rarely, if ever, analyzed them critically as something more than a spectacle that might have

[9] For a complete survey of the early relationship between science and motion pictures see: Leonard Donaldson, *The Cinematograph and Natural Science* (London, UK: Ganes Limited, 1912).
[10] Charles Urban, "The Cinematograph in Science and Education," *The Moving Picture World*, July 1907, 324.

additional benefits to science, academia, and the military. The ambivalent assessment of motion pictures partly reflected the uncertainty of their future. No one knew if they would remain popular. In the rapidly modernizing world, it was hard to foresee if film had any long-term benefits for everyday life.

Despite the immediate contributions of motion pictures to science, public recreation patterns shifted repeatedly in the late-nineteenth century as time-honored Victorian values clashed with new forms of mass culture. Frances Doublier, a cameraman who worked with Louis and Auguste Lumiere in Lyons at the time, believed that the film craze had "run its course."[11] Later, Louis Lumiere similarly admitted his surprise that motion pictures had "grown to the dimensions of a world-wide industry and art and a mighty power for international understanding and peace."[12] Even Thomas Edison, who had employed William Dickson to promote and manage the bulk of his Kinetoscope experiments, was uncertain of cinema's staying power. Edison had never truly made motion pictures a priority until business rivals in Europe demonstrated their financial potential. He initially dismissed acquiring foreign patents on his Kinetoscope because he had not considered it worth the $150 price tag.[13] Evidently, according to early accounts from Edison and the Lumiere brothers, the oft-cited inventors of cinema, motion pictures appeared better fit for Coney Island, the Atlantic City boardwalk, and Parisian cellars than The Hague.

Despite their underwhelming enthusiasm for their own inventions, the independent inventors neglected to account for the immeasurable power of their own mythology, which ballooned considerably throughout the early 1900s. The public's infatuation with independent

[11] "Topics of the Times," *The New York Times,* February 5, 1940, 13.
[12] "Hays Lauds Lumiere," *The New York Times,* June 25, 1930, 12.
[13] Proehl Haller Jaklon, "The Screen: Its Amazing History," *The Polk County News,* July 1st, 1926, 2.

inventors brought film cameras into larger discussions over new technology. Between 1880 and World War I, independent inventors became national icons and their innovations fascinated millions. Celebrated as the embodiment of American know-how and pragmatism, they by and large resisted institutionalization and the constraints of big business. They preferred to work within their own home or workshop where they were free to experiment using trial-and-error methods. The media constructed an image of these inventors not as scientists working within the physical laws of nature, but as "magicians" who tapped into mysterious, supernatural powers. Of all the contributors to the advent of motion pictures none were as famous as Edison, the Wizard of Menlo Park. After Edison and Dickson's pioneering breakthroughs with roll film, which George Eastman later perfected, motion pictures took on greater length and filmgoers increasingly revered their "magic."

The perceived magic of motion pictures stemmed from their attachment to the mystique of independent inventors and their acceptance as a distinct art. Once entertainers like George Melies and D.W. Griffith—both business affiliates of Edison and Dickson—adopted motion pictures, it became clear that cinema was not simply a perversion of traditional theater. Within their elaborate narratives and set pieces, Melies and Griffith experimented with editing, special effects, and camera movements, laying the foundation for what the motion picture industry called "film grammar." They brought an unprecedented level of esteem and enthusiasm to what were no longer "toys."[14] Patrons of nickelodeons and early movie theaters quickly embraced these films as windows into other worlds. "With the moving picture," one film aficionado exclaimed, "we can rub our own eyes and witness more tremendous miracles than Aladdin could have by rubbing his magic lamp."[15] Seemingly more fit for a science fiction novel than real life,

[14] "Moving Picture Legislation," *The Nickelodeon*, May 1909, 122.
[15] Donaldson, 93.

films were likened by some journalists to time machines. "The motion picture," one newspaper reported, "puts Time in a can, freezes it."[16] Giving new meaning to the malleability of space and time, the editing process demonstrated uniquely the fundamentals of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. Space and time were not absolute and could be condensed, elongated, and shaped on a flatbed. Advertisements for production equipment of the era promised a well-made piece of equipment, as well as the mechanical wizardry of independent inventors. The onset of World War I, however, nearly extinguished the magic.

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand in 1914 amplified overlapping European national aspirations and engaged the world in total warfare. In only four years, the war killed more than 17 million people, or approximately two percent of the entire world's population.[17] Before the war, many commentators had viewed modern technology as a tool to create world peace and greater economic prosperity. However, as the war demonstrated, technological advancements were a double-edged sword. They gave rise to efficient systems of communication and transportation but also ushered in an era of unparalleled destruction. Flamethrowers, chemical bombs, tanks, and automatic firearms reflected the nightmarish underbelly of innovation, examples of scientific advancement gone awry. The weapons of war reflected the duality of technological progress. The violent character and course of the war demanded a rethinking of large-scale technological systems, of which motion pictures had become an integral part.

Motion pictures supported every facet of the war effort. From all sides of the front, belligerents used millions of feet of 35mm film. At the time, it was the most photographed conflict in history and nearly every battle from Tanga to Ypres played itself out in front of the

[16] Terry Ramsaye, "Movies Total 624 Hours of Screen Time," *The Sunday Morning Star,* August 14, 1938, 14.
[17] Matthew White, *The Great Big Book of Horrible Things: The Definitive Chronicle of History's 100 Worst Atrocities* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 234.

gaze of a camera lens. On the battlefield, military leaders used motion pictures routinely for the purposes of documentation, strategic planning, and reconnaissance. Motion pictures could survey territory, provide a visual inventory of munitions and resources, and prep troops on infantry and aerial combat formations. Moreover, they entertained weary soldiers at home and abroad. According to the State Department, films were "one of the most powerful factors in keeping up the morale of the soldiers."[18] They were an integral part of the war machine.

In fact, motion picture and military technologies evolved simultaneously. Tanks, automatic weapons, mortars, and fighter aircrafts relied on visual technologies developed within the motion picture industry. They were the outcome of the complementary relationship between big business and military, a marriage that defined the experience of total warfare. In the United States, France, Germany, and Russia, professional film studios like Pathe, Gaumont, and Paramount Pictures worked regularly with the armed forces to rally support for the war effort. Together, they engineered important simulation technologies that manipulated representations of space and time. The gaze of modern weaponry owes much to the gaze of a film camera. Because of the deeply symbiotic relationship between the war and cinema, film critic Stuart Klawans argues that "every picture we see is in some sense a World War I movie."[19]

The war front nurtured a space, albeit a deadly one, ripe for creative experimentation. Many of film's formal elements, from editing to artificial lighting, developed as impromptu reactions to the conditions of the battlefield. For example, the chaotic and violent nature of the trenches forced Signal Corps cameramen to try "panning" shots, aerial photography, and the montage, techniques that would later revolutionize how audiences experienced and consumed

[18] "Chairman of National Board of Review Talks on Influence of Motion Pictures," *Exhibitors Herald*, February 2, 1918, 36.
[19] Stuart Klawans, "How the First World War Changed Movies Forever," *The New York Times*, November 19, 2000.

motion pictures. Advertisements for motion picture camera companies embraced the ubiquity of their product in the war as their chief selling point. "It was used in the mud and wet of the trenches on the firing line," the company boasted, "in the observation balloons, in the military bases and camps, and everywhere the signal corps cameramen went."[20] Some of the bold new techniques created by Signal Corps cameramen helped inspire other filmmakers to articulate the look and feel of what the state would celebrate as a "national cinema"—a collection of films that enforce the nation-building agenda of the government. The ubiquitous nationalism of the war forced filmmakers around the world to articulate what made their works uniquely American, French, British, German, Australian, Russian, or Japanese. This appealed greatly to audiences on the domestic front.

At home, motion pictures provided the public a new way to consume and negotiate with the war. Newsreels became ubiquitous throughout urban theaters and challenged the newspaper as the primary means for war correspondence. The prolific British production company Pathé News, for example, released weekly images of the war in its widely popular *Animated Gazette* series, garnering millions of viewers throughout the allied nations. Many reporters credited newsreels with bringing home the reality of the war in ways that the printed word simply could not. Motion pictures, one theatergoer noted, forced viewers to "become eyewitness to the great conflict."[21] Others dismissed the notion of audiences as mere bystanders and credited pioneer newsreel cinematographers with the ability to place the audience in the trenches directly "under the muzzles of the guns."[22] Many American trade journals even treated the viewing of newsreels as an essential patriotic duty.[23] "Able-bodied Americans who stayed at home," one endorsement

[20] "The Universal was Put to Every Test," *Moving Picture World*, May, 1919, 904.
[21] Roger Packard, "The Movie Machine Gunner," *Picture-Play Magazine*, September 1917, 61.
[22] Ibid.
[23] See: "Patriotism and Pictures, "*Picture-Play Magazine*, September 1917, 1.

for newsreels exclaimed, "should attend an open-air movie and cheer the boys who went to the front."[24] Newsreel producers of course did not intend all motion pictures to function strictly as practical documentaries.

Propaganda films roused nationalist sentiment, vilified opposing forces, and encouraged enlistment. An anecdote in *Bioscope*, a popular British motion picture journal, detailed the persuasive power of propaganda films when it described a correspondent's experience inside a Parisian theater as he overheard a conversation between a young French man and his mother:

> As military picture followed military picture I watched the boy's baby jaw set firm. His eyes sparkled, his mouth was tightly closed – the cinematograph was feeding his patriotism. Not a word did he utter until the end of the show. Then he turned to the left and said, "Mamam, I want to go too." The women's eyes instantly filled with tears. "Don't", she sobbed, "don't go for my sake." "I'm going to go for my country's sake," I heard him reply.[25]

Studio-produced films such as *If My Country Should Call* (1916) and *Hearts of the World* (1918) stirred similar fervor within packed theaters and became cinema's first "blockbusters" by shattering nearly all previous attendance records.[26]

The appeal of these films stemmed partly from their exciting portrayal of military technology. *Hearts of the World*, for example, depicts various battles along the Western Front in epic scale. Extreme wide shots reveal hundreds of soldiers crossing no man's land with hordes of tanks barreling towards them. Streams of fire flash stylishly across the screen as soldiers brandishing flamethrowers set trees ablaze. Several scenes pulse intermittently with blinding white light to simulate the enormity of high explosives. Popular films provided the perfect

[24] "A Patriotic Eruption," *Picture-Play Magazine*, September 1917, 51.
[25] *The Bioscope*, August 20, 1914, 751.
[26] Other notable blockbusters include *The Battle Cry of Peace* (1915), *The Battle of the Somme* (1916), and *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin* (1918).

opportunity to show off the awesome power of American military might.[27] However, once the smoke had settled and the soldiers returned to their homes in the winter of 1918, the widespread enthusiasm for hyper-nationalist films faded and shame set in.

World War I proved an unmitigated disaster for nearly all combatants. At its end, Europe was in ruins and the global economy had contracted sharply. Once American policymakers and reporters reflected on the horrendous human and financial cost of the war, motion pictures, like all major technologies that served the war effort, demanded reevaluation. When reflecting on the use of propaganda films, Arthur Ponsonby, an influential British politician and social activist, famously remarked, "There must have been more deliberate lying in the world from 1914 to 1918 than in any other period in the world's history."[28] In the decade following the war, Ponsonby worked with American diplomats to spearhead several initiatives that criticized visual propaganda as one of the immediate threats to liberal democracy. By actively promoting a fair and nuanced depiction of German, Turkish, and Austria-Hungarian actions and motives during the war, Ponsonby became a poster child for what historians later considered a pacifist turn in international relations.

The unprecedented violence that characterized World War I triggered a paradigm shift in how most people viewed armed combat. It was impossible to reconcile traditional interpretations of valor and honor with the mutual butchery that had engulfed the Eastern and Western Fronts. The once firmly established line of demarcation between military and domestic life had become permanently blurred. Millions had died, but for what purpose? It truly was, as countless

[27] President Wilson expanded the Army and Navy greatly in 1916 after the passing of the National Defense Act. The act ensured that the United States military also had access to the new weapons and equipment that European nations were producing rapidly, such as combat planes and tear gas.

[28] Arthur Ponsoby, *Falsehood in War-Time: Propaganda Lies of the First World War,* 1928. Available at: Project Gutenberg Australia (accessed June 14, 2017).

historians have explained, a "victorless" conflict. Reacting to the immense violence of the war, a new generation of peace advocates emerged to support the activities of the newly created League of Nations, which operated under the misconception that the world could not endure another global conflict. As Woodrow Wilson famously stated, the bloody conflagration had been "the war to end all wars."[29] Sharing Bradlet's earlier frustration, Wilson, like most Americans, was unambiguously "sick of war." As a result, Bradlet's prediction would prove correct; nearly every diplomatic body from The Hague to the League of Nations would embrace cinema as a means for preventing another world war. Just as nations could use films as a means to support the war effort, one commentator for the League of Nations film division surmised, they could use them to "ensure progressively the Prosperity and the wellbeing of Humanity."[30] Similarly, Cranston Brenton, chairman of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, was certain films would "have a large place in maintaining peace and preventing future wars through the fact that it brings to all nations, races, and creeds, the life of all other peoples" and thus alleviates the "gigantic misunderstandings" that triggered World War I.[31]

The war ended the era of the independent inventor and brought motion pictures to the forefront of industry. Sponsored by massive firms, such as General Electric and DuPont, technological innovation became institutionalized within corporate laboratories throughout the 1920s. Incremental improvements and adjustments to existing technologies replaced the need for the independent inventor's much cherished and sought after "eureka moments." Dependent upon new research and development programs, technological innovation had become evolutionary

[29] Woodrow Wilson, "Address to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War against Germany," 2 April 1917. Available at: Millercenter.org (accessed July 12, 2017).
[30] *International Review of Educational Cinematography*, April 1929, 8.
[31] "Chairman of National Board of Review Talks on Influence of Motion Pictures," *Exhibitors Herald*, February 2, 1918, 36.

rather than revolutionary. This transformation, as Thomas Hughes and other scholars have made clear, represented the emergence of system-builders as the dominant force in technological innovation. Technological systems typically refer to large-scale electrical, communication, transportation, production, and military networks that function as the foundation of modern society. They consist of both physical components—the actual 'nuts-and-bolts' that make the system operate—and social, political, and economic, components that shape and are shaped by the system itself. One of the most visible technological systems appeared in Southern California with the ascent of the "Big Five" and "Little Three" film studios.

As large corporations gradually usurped the role of independent inventors, a handful of powerful studios consolidated control over the motion picture industry. The dozens of small independent production houses that had once served as the basis for American filmmaking became obsolete in the wake of what Hollywood insiders dubbed the "studio system." Together the Big Five—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Paramount, Warner Bros., 20th Century Fox, and RKO—and the Little Three—Universal, Columbia, and United Artists—gained control over the production, distribution, and exhibition of films. These vertically integrated firms were bicoastal business empires that collectively released hundreds of features every year. Their corporate offices were based in New York City and their studio lots, popularly known as "dream factories," were based in Los Angeles. A handful of charismatic movie moguls, such as Louis Mayer, Carl Laemmle, and Adolph Zukor, managed each studio from the top-down. As they harnessed the magic of motion pictures, these studio heads garnered reputations not as artists but as powerful system-builders akin to Henry Ford or Andrew Carnegie. Though rarely treated as technological innovators, the studio heads perfected a style of management and organization that provided products to tens of millions of people every week.

The studio system helped foist the once fledgling toy business to the center of global commerce and establish motion pictures as one of the United States' most lucrative industries, comparable to steel and agriculture.[32] As a result, many Americans acknowledged the studios as one of the major sources responsible for the greater prosperity of the Roaring Twenties. Americans tend to forget that the 1920s, a period renowned for its affluence, began in a recession marked by over 100,000 bankruptcies. However, the Russian Revolution triggered a "Red Scare" that helped suppress the remedies offered by labor leaders, especially those who represented anti-capitalist sentiments. With the aid of the Hollywood studios, monopoly firms such as AT&T, US Steel, and IBM worked tirelessly to portray themselves as major barriers to the spread of Bolshevism, gaining the approval of influential politicians from various parties. As the economy began to strengthen exponentially around the mid-1920s, corporate titans had done what they could to try and convince Americans that they alone created the prosperity characteristic of the decade. Millions of middle-class and working-class Americans began to see corporations and *not* governments as responsible for economic improvement and technological innovation. Leading pacifist and idealist organizations championed these corporations as powerful purveyors of their cause, which brought the studios into larger discussions over the nature of world peace. Those Americans who believed in the peacekeeping potential of motion pictures often championed the corporate power of Hollywood as a means to achieve their goals.

Though Americans' taste for entertainment shifted repeatedly and was nearly impossible to determine with any degree of certainty, the American film industry was exceptionally stable. This was largely the result of a unique blend of management and artistry, two forces that many consider to be fundamentally at odds. Though the studio system acknowledged film as an art

[32] "At least $500,000,000 Invested in Movies," *The New York Times*, January 2, 1916, 108.

form, the primary goal was to sell movie tickets and ensure a profitable return on every release. To steer the talents of cast and crew effectively, management entered into nearly every facet of their professional and personal lives. At MGM, for example, Louis Mayer hired Irving Thalberg to oversee every step of the production process. Thalberg developed stories with his team of writers, created new lenses and lights for his cinematographers, drafted storyboards and shooting scripts for his directors, and crafted a public persona for his performers. Despite his young age, Thalberg saw himself as a parental figure responsible for maintaining high moral and ethical standards both on and off the set. According to one reporter who had studied his methods, even the MGM lion, the studio's official symbol and mascot, "never roars without an O.K. from Irving Thalberg."[33]

The son of German Jewish immigrants, Thalberg grew up in a working-class neighborhood in Brooklyn. At the age of twenty he befriended Carl Laemmle, the president of Universal Studios, and became his personal assistant. Within only a year, he climbed the studio's ranks and found himself managing the production of several feature films on a massive three-hundred-and-sixty-acre lot. He had a knack for developing foreign talent and worked tirelessly to acquire some of the most influential directors and actors from abroad, most notably Austrian filmmaker Erich von Stroheim, Mexican actor Ramon Novarro, and Swedish actress Greta Garbo. Thalberg's reputation grew rapidly and, when Louis Mayer partnered with Samuel Goldwyn and Marcus Loew to form MGM, he immediately sought out the talent and tenacity of the individual who industry leaders had nicknamed the "boy wonder." Thalberg personified the promising allure of Hollywood. His rags-to-riches story echoed the central tenets of the American Dream and the American melting pot. He professed that anyone, anywhere could

[33] "The Men Who Make the Movies," *The New Movie Magazine*, December 1931, 95.

"make it" if they worked hard and applied themselves. The film industry to Thalberg was the land of opportunity in miniature, a place where Europeans, Hispanics, and Anglo-Americans came together and benefited from one another's talents. Because Hollywood employed individuals from all over the globe, many reporters insisted that it was inherently more international than other professional film industries and therefore the one best suited to serve as a peacekeeping force.

While serving as the production supervisor at MGM, Thalberg pioneered the management style most affiliated with the studio system. He believed the studio's lots, administrative buildings, and fleet of 1,500 formal employees had to be "scientifically balanced."[34] Based on the operations of Henry Ford's automobile factories in Detroit, the studio was built in a grid formation to ensure the efficient mobilization of labor and technical resources. Every facet of production received its own department and distinct division of labor. Heeding many of the principles of Fredrick Taylor's scientific management, Thalberg figured he could mass produce films without sacrificing artistic quality. Though his idea had its fair share of skeptics, few doubted Thalberg's methods once they saw MGM's first major release, *The Big Parade* (1925).

Directed by the prolific King Vidor, *The Big Parade* chronicles the life of James Apperson, a lazy American teenager who has little interest in following in the footsteps of his father, a successful businessman. When the United States enters World War I in 1917, Apperson enlists in the Army in order to appease his patriotic parents. The naïve soldier develops ideas of becoming a hero and befriends two working-class New Yorkers before shipping off to France to fight the Germans on the Western Front. Once they arrive, they are met with mustard gas and

[34] Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York City: Pantheon Books, 1988), 20.

sniper fire. The harsh reality of life in the trenches shatters their illusions of grandeur and they quickly find themselves disenchanted with their surroundings. In the midst of catastrophic violence, Jim meets a young farmer and falls in love. As their relationship blossoms, James' two friends are killed in action. By depicting the violence of war explicitly and without remorse, the film immediately garnered the approval of the public and various pacifist organizations.

Bringing in over twenty million dollars in ticket sales, *The Big Parade* was by many accounts the highest-grossing film of the silent era. Though unlike its competitors, MGM did not own a massive theater chain in order to ensure its films would have an audience. Paramount, for example, bought out approximately five-hundred theaters and therefore had to constantly navigate the risks of the real estate market and set aside funding for building renovations and maintenance. This gave the studio executives considerable power over the exhibition of their films, but also tied them to economic forces outside of their control. Thalberg hated that idea and focused his energies instead on owning only approximately one-hundred high-end theaters in major urban areas, such as New York City. This created a demand for MGM films and gave their releases an unprecedented level of prestige. *The Big Parade,* Thalberg insisted, was sophisticated entertainment and fine art.

This marketing strategy was effective and helped make John Gilbert, the film's protagonist, a household name and bona fide star. As one of the architects of the "star system," one of MGM's primary forms of quality control, Thalberg helped Gilbert construct his public image as a chivalrous gentleman. By signing his performers to long-term contracts, Thalberg was able to sell his stars as products in and of themselves. He advised Gilbert on everything from his roles to his romantic interests. Thalberg and his cohorts catered to the burgeoning tabloid industry and framed every aspect of their performers' lives as extensions of the MGM brand. By

the end of the 1920s, each studio had become affiliated with a specific genre or style of film. Audiences looked to MGM for epic dramas, Paramount for comedies, Warner Bros. for gangster and crime dramas, Fox for musicals, and Universal for horror and science fiction. The studio heads went to great lengths to ensure their stars were representing the studio's signature style of filmmaking appropriately. The star system cannot be attributed to *The Big Parade* alone, of course. However, it did begin MGM's reputation for having "more stars than the Heavens." The enormous success of *The Big Parade* showed the world that the Hollywood business model worked. In effect, the studio system came into its own with a film that championed pacifism and the inherent follies of war.

Researchers for the League of Nations had a keen interest in *The Big Parade* and wanted to measure its influence on viewers, particularly children. They were curious if watching anti-war films actually made the public more peaceful and opposed to war. In an article published in the League of Nations' journal *Educational Survey*, sociologist C.M. Wilson detailed her findings from studying the reactions of more than a thousand students from Bradford, Yorkshire to twenty-three different war films. Students were provided a survey in order to gauge their opinion of war after watching the films. European propaganda such as *The Battle of the Somme* (1916) generated enthusiastic replies from a handful of students. One even claimed it made him want to "blow the head off the men who make war with England." However, the study also concluded that when the children were shown films stressing the horrors of war, "an overwhelming percentage are made peace advocates."[35] Though *The Big Parade* was one of only a few American films shown, it had the greatest impact on shaping the students' outlook. According to one student participant, *The Big Parade* "made me think that war is the most

[35] Clarence Streit, "Youth's View of War as Gleaned in Movies," *The New York Times,* September 1, 1929, 16.

horrible way of making peace."[36] Despite the fact that over ninety percent of the students who had watched the film were now "opposed to war," the researchers were alarmed when finding only eight percent demonstrated they had any idea that the League of Nations or any diplomatic alternatives to war even existed. "Films that would follow up the war pictures," the research team surmised, "and make children aware of the peace machinery that has been set up since 1918 is strongly needed."[37]

The Big Parade helped expand the market for anti-war films that provided a realistic view of combat, which made MGM's rivals eager to cash in on the demand. Like an echo chamber, competing studios frequently mimicked the fashionable films of their contemporaries. Fox's *What Price Glory?* (1926), Paramount's *Wings* (1927), and First National's *The Patent Leather Kid* (1927) followed in the wake of *The Big Parade* and garnered the approval of many pacifist organizations since they all provided an honest portrayal of the opposing side. These films do not vilify Germans or Turks, the enemies most prevalent in earlier American war films, and instead treat them as complex and rational individuals. Carl Milliken, former governor of Maine and secretary of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, called movie theaters the "school of tolerance" and applauded the release of films which "hold up a mirror to every phase of human activity with accuracy and vivid realism."[38] Films like *The Big Parade*, he argued, "help us form clearer judgments of the ceaseless work of nations [so] no longer is it true that half of the world ignores what the other half is doing."[39] As an official spokesman for the American film industry, Milliken was surely attempting to bolster the profile of the major studios while they were working tirelessly to export their products overseas. Because Hollywood

[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] "Screen Theater is School of Tolerance, Says Milliken," *Exhibitors Herald*, August 20, 1927, 30.
[39] Ibid.

represented such a racially and ethnically diverse workforce, however, Milliken genuinely believed it was the century's preeminent vehicle for fostering international understanding. And understanding, he insisted repeatedly, "is the basis for world peace."[40]

Many prominent filmmakers and actors embraced ideas similar to Milliken's and denounced the common perception of Hollywood as a global brain drain intentionally depriving foreign nations of their domestic talent. Although, one could certainly argue that was precisely what the studio system was designed to do. After signing a contract with Universal, German leading man Conrad Veidt, best known for his performance in the influential *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), called the studio system a "source of reciprocity between filmmakers of Europe and America." He believed it was cultivating an international spirit and educating audiences about the customs of other nations. "Each has something to give to the other," Veidt professed, "America its enthusiasm and optimism; Europe its originality and fine character portrayal."[41] Veidt's comments, however, were not in sync with the larger actions of the German film industry. Anti-Hollywood sentiment flourished in Germany after the war because many German producers saw the major American studios as imperialist monopolies trying to saturate European theaters with American films. Veidt and other supporters of the studio system disagreed with this negative assessment. Veidt was part of a growing body of filmmakers and performers who considered the major studios' desire to appeal to European and other foreign audiences as a means to international friendship. The Hollywood dream factories, he figured, would naturally have to diversify their products in order to meet the sophisticated tastes of European theatergoers, which would result in higher quality films about a greater number of nations and peoples.

---

[40] Ibid.
[41] "Veidt's International Plan," *Motion Picture News*, February 11, 1927, 467.

Like nearly all other observers who championed Hollywood cinema as a tool for international understanding, Veidt always stressed how it was a silent medium. Herein rested its peacekeeping power. The art of pantomime was universal. Adolph Zukor, the founder and president of Paramount, considered silent films "an international language such as the world had never known."[42] John Freuler, the president of Mutual Film, similarly promoted his works as part of a "great service in the ultimate consummation of a world brotherhood."[43] Those who worked directly under these powerful movie moguls, such as film producer Benjamin Hampton, parroted these remarks routinely, calling studio silent films an expression of "anti-war sentiments that can prevent war."[44] After World War I, almost all studio executives used such utopian language when discussing their films. Even formal educators, such as the governing body of the journal *Visual Education*, praised silent cinema as "a world humanizer" that allowed people to see one another, not as "Germans" or "Americans," but as fellow human beings.[45] Because silent films did not have any spoken dialogue, they were easily accessible to almost any audience. This made it easy for the studios to promote their products as a unifying force.

The only confusion came from the occasional mistranslation of an intertitle, a block of text that producers inserted into the action of a scene to reveal a complex plot. Most films of the Silent Era, however, only contained a handful of intertitles, which made it easy and inexpensive for studios to secure accurate translations for their foreign releases. Some trade publications, like *Motion Picture News*, acknowledged silent film as "a common language" in and of itself, but called for the production of films that transcended the need for any intertitles. If one can

[42] Paramount Pictures Corporation, *The Story of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation* (New York City: Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, 1919), 5.
[43] John Freuler, "Freuler on the Film as an Institution," *Exhibitors Herald*, April 27, 1918, 21.
[44] "Publicity Men Future Leaders of Producing Field, Says Hampton," *Exhibitors Herald*, June 18, 1921, 52.
[45] Catherine Ely, "The Screen: A World Humanizer," *Visual Education*, February 1921, 17-20.

appreciate a great painting without a written explanation, why must filmmakers confine themselves to the use of words? "It is regarded as a triumph of the motion picture artist," they argued, "that he can make a picture which does not require subtitling."[46] It was not uncommon for film critics to measure a film's artistic worth in relation to its dependence upon printed words. For example, critics credited the global popularity of film comedian Charlie Chaplin to his ability to "make himself independent of words, speaking to millions in the language of pure movement."[47]

Discussions over the universality of silent cinema dovetailed with the rise of the "Esperanto movement." The self-described idealist Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof, an independent inventor and ophthalmologist from Russian-occupied Poland, developed Esperanto in the late-nineteenth century as a means for all peoples to communicate more effectively. Esperanto, which translates literally to "the one who hopes," combines a Latin alphabet with simple, exception-free grammatical rules. There is no masculine and feminine classification of nouns and verbs do not require conjugation. Moreover, because it is agglutinative, it is remarkably easy to learn. Speakers form words by simply adding prefixes and suffixes to one of several hundred stem words. As a constructed language, the goal of Esperanto was to serve as a worldwide second language.

Growing up in a Jewish neighborhood in the ethnically diverse Bialystok, Zamenhof recognized a language barrier between himself and the Polish, Russian, and German communities nearby. He believed this language barrier forced each ethnic enclave to treat one another with suspicion and occasional hostility. If all people shared a common tongue, he reasoned, it would make it easier to embrace neighbors as equals. However, instead of learning

[46] "Pictures as a Common Language," *Motion Picture News*, November 22, 1913, 26.
[47] "The Art of Charles Chaplin," *Pictures and Picturegoer*, April 1925, 42.

to speak Polish, Russian, and German fluently, which he believed was too difficult and expensive for most, a new, more accessible language was needed. Operating under the assumption that language was the most important cultural force on the planet, Zamenhof preached, "Were there but an international language—a language unequivocally accepted by everyone—all nations would be united in common brotherhood."[48]

The Esperanto movement expanded gradually in the first decade of the twentieth century and peaked in popularity in the late 1920s. During this Golden Age of Esperanto, millions of individuals in Europe, Asia, and the Americas had learned the simplified language and championed it as a path to a warless world. Publishing companies took note and began releasing on average one book printed in Esperanto every other day.[49] The tremendous surge in Esperanto programs after World War I reflected the increasingly global nature of modern life and the heightened status of liberal idealism and pacifism in matters of diplomacy. The League of Nations, for example, was particularly interested in the utility of Esperanto and nearly adopted it as its official auxiliary language in 1922.[50] However, fearing the language might diminish the role of French in League affairs, Gabriel Hanotaux, France's official delegate to the League, vetoed the proposition. President of Universal Studios Carl Laemmle agreed with Hanotaux's decision and similarly dismissed Esperanto as "ill-fated and ridiculously impractical." Instead of everyone learning a new language, which, according to Laemmle, was counterproductive since modern systems of transportation and communication made the world "too small for so many languages," the League of Nations should encourage all public schools to adopt only one,

[48] Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof, translated by R.H. Geoghegan, *Dr. Esperanto's International Language: Introduction and Complete Grammar* (Halifax: First Printing, 2006, reprint of 1889 original), 1.
[49] Edward S. Van Zile, *That Marvel—The Movie* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1923), 192.
[50] See: "Esperanto as an International Auxiliary Language," Report of the General Secretariat of the League of Nations adopted by the Third Assembly, 1922.

preferably English or Spanish, for its students to learn alongside their native tongue. In a letter he had penned for League officials, Laemmle detailed the benefits a universal second language would have on diplomacy and commerce. "World peace is not the only reason for a world language," Laemmle wrote, "world prosperity is another [as] the business of the world would be speeded up immeasurably."[51] Conveniently, a world language would also make it easier for Laemmle to sell his company's films.

The Hollywood studio system benefitted from the Esperanto trend as many advocates figured it would promote its cause. To meet demand, studios like Universal and Paramount occasionally released silent films with Esperanto intertitles. The World Esperanto Association, the largest international organization of its kind, encouraged this practice and tried to convince studio executives to make it the industry standard. Because Esperanto's grammar and vocabulary mirrored Hollywood's cosmopolitan workforce, many assumed they were a perfect pair.[52] Much like the industry itself, it too was an amalgamation of English, Hebrew, German, and Spanish elements. The parallels between Esperanto and Hollywood received both praise and criticism. Many trade journals, like *The Photodramatist*, wondered why Esperanto was needed at all since silent cinema had already "outstripped the printing press, the public rostrum, and the daily paper" as a communication technology. Since there were far more moviegoers than Esperanto-speakers in the world, they figured film was better at meeting Zamenhof's initial goal of bringing nations closer together. By its very nature, they argued, film was already "the Esperanto of international understanding."[53] Novelist and screenwriter Rupert Hughes shared this sentiment and argued that

[51] "Carl Laemmle Urges International Tongue," *Exhibitors Trade Review,* October 11, 1924, 11.
[52] Everett Leighton, "From the Four Corners," *Picture-Play Magazine*, May 1917, 88-89.
[53] Alfred Hustwick, "The Guild Forum," *The Photodramatist,* October 1921, 8. "Daily Critic Drinks Toast to Short Subjects," *Exhibitors Trade Review,* February 16, 1924, 31.

with cinema, "the only universal language, Esperanto falls into insignificance."[54] According to many of Esperanto's critics, the language missed the point of film entirely since it smothered the medium with unnecessary words. In his oft-cited 1924 book, *That Marvel—The Movie*, film critic Edward Van Zile acknowledged Esperanto as a useful harbinger of world peace, but asserted, "in comparison to the Esperanto of the Eye, the universal language sprung from the screen, its conquest of the earth is painfully slow, and its final complete triumph would still leave the world-language of the eye more potent than world-language of the tongue."[55]

The debate over the role of Esperanto in Hollywood shifted dramatically with advancements in sound technology. In 1927, *Warner Bros.* released *The Jazz Singer*, the first popular feature film to make use of synchronized sound. Though a handful of studios and directors had dabbled in sound films previous to *The Jazz Singer*, few found them cost-effective or reliable. D.W. Griffith's *Dream Street* (1921), for example, included a short sequence of actor Ralph Graves singing, but few theaters could afford the sound-on-disc technology needed to screen it properly. Moreover, projectionists found early sound films cumbersome and prone to malfunction. With the invention of the Vitaphone, a device that affordably interlocked a phonograph with a film projector, *The Jazz Singer* was able to provide audiences with lively musical numbers and spoken dialogue. The film enthralled the public despite the fact it was still primarily silent. Costing Warner Bros. approximately a half million dollars to shoot, *The Jazz Singer* was a tremendous risk. Few knew if the "talkie" would prove more than a curiosity, as Irving Thalberg at MGM had assumed. After grossing over seven times its budget at the box office, the film demonstrated the financial potential for sound films and made a strong case for their staying power.

[54] "Nobody Too Great for Screen," *Motion Picture News*, November 27, 1920, 4119.
[55] Van Zile, 193.

As the demand for talkies skyrocketed between 1927 and 1933, the major studios scrambled to adjust. Updating theater-chains to accommodate sound technology was expensive and time-consuming. Executives also had to employ a fleet of new technicians and crew members to manage sound stages and recording booths on the lot. In addition, many popular stars from the Silent Era were now finding their talent and hard work expendable as the studios gave long-term contracts to a variety of new performers with allegedly more marketable voices. John Gilbert, the star of *The Big Parade*, a film that had helped launch the studio system only a few years earlier, never fully adjusted to sound films and his career, along with those of many of his peers, started to decline. Thousands of working musicians also grew anxious as sound technology challenged the need for live performers to accompany screenings. For these reasons and many others, not all of the studios immediately embraced sound. Silent films remained popular and a majority of critics stayed hopeful that talkies were only a passing fad. They lambasted them for challenging the art of pantomime and turning cinema into little more than recorded theater.[56]

For many critics, talkies actually signaled the death of the Hollywood studio system and film as a distinct art form. "Hollywood is no longer *Hollywood,*" a writer for *Close Up* proclaimed as "the movie which held dominion over the world by reason of its unity of language, the pristine Esperanto of filmdom, [has] now become the modern Babel."[57] For peace advocates, the coming of sound was a major blow to their worldview. Those who believed film was a technology for world peace operated under the assumption that seeing how other peoples lived was enough to foster international understanding. Sound films complicated this belief.

[56] James Kraft, *Stage to Studio: Musicians and the Sound Revolution, 1890-1950* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1996).
[57] "Hollywood Review," *Close Up*, June 1931, 112.

Understanding would not stem solely from seeing, but also hearing. Many feared sound would re-nationalize the medium and strip it of what was once considered an inherently egalitarian characteristic. An affiliate of the League of Nations made this clear:

> A universal language was about to speak and was therefore about to lose in consequence its very first quality which more than any other had won success for it everywhere and had held out the best hopes to those who saw in this new art form the surest and most efficacious means of universal interpretation and understanding.[58]

Esperantists, however, envisioned sound technology as an opportunity and not a threat.

Because language is intrinsically political and has historically been one of the driving forces for communities to divide one another into categories of "us" and "them," Esperantists figured the studios would never agree to release their films only in English. The fear of alienating key demographics abroad was too great. In the early twentieth century, the calls for self-determination had resonated around the globe. Communities in Africa, Europe, and Asia championed their mother tongues as hallmarks of their identities. In World War I, for example, Serbian and Croatian minority groups rallied for their independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire largely because they spoke a language different from that of the ruling elite. Esperantists also recognized the immense financial burden that translation efforts would have on the studios. If Hollywood were to continue its reign as the undisputed king of film production and hold its grip on foreign markets, it would have to release films in dozens of languages, including French, Spanish, German, Japanese, and Thai. All films would have to include either dubbed voices or subtitles. Dubbing was impractical because it required hiring an entirely new cast of foreign talent to re-enact each scene from a recording booth. Many stars hated that idea because it removed all nuance from their initial performance. Was it really acting, they wondered, if

[58] G. Moulan, "The Cinema and International Amity," *International Review of Educational Cinematography*, December 1932, 907.

another performer was going to speak every line of dialogue? Moreover, many felt dubbing was hard to take seriously since the dubbed language never perfectly synced with the movement of the actor's lips. Subtitles were more cost-effective but raised the question of whether audiences were willing to read at the theater. For some, the answer was simple: Esperanto.

Most Esperantists were technological enthusiasts and believed the spread of their language was the inevitable result of modern systems of communication and transportation. The cinema, which, according to the World Esperanto Association, was the most popular medium in the world, could be converted easily into a training vehicle for the language. For the first several years of the talkie, they argued, the studios should continue to release their films in English. However, before each screening, a short newsreel should precede the feature and provide an introductory lesson on grammar and syntax. Then, during the film, the audience could follow along with Esperanto subtitles. Because the language was allegedly simple to learn, audiences would quickly acquire the fundamentals and soon be able to comprehend entire films spoken only in Esperanto.[59] Though the plan required considerable startup costs, most figured it would prove more affordable and less cumbersome than the alternatives. The idea resonated outside of Esperanto circles and even inspired some influential figures in Hollywood. Prolific film director Clarence Brown, for example, believed in the utility of the language and thought it would solve what many reporters called the "great talkie panic."[60] According to Brown, films were so integral to society and life that the talkie would be the "stimulus for every country to accept a universal tongue."[61] Though the studios never committed fully to adopting the language, they refused to ignore its potential. MGM and Paramount were particularly interested and made sure to purchase

[59] "A La Esperanto," *Motion Picture News*, July 26, 1930, 48. "A Thought," *Close Up*, November 1928, 68.
[60] Dorothy Calhoun, "The Great Talkie Panic," *Motion Picture Classic*, September 1928, 16.
[61] "Brown Says Esperanto Solves Foreign Talkie," *Exhibitors Daily Review*, July 7, 1928, 2.

the rights for an Esperanto version of select stories and screenplays. They even released a few films featuring select scenes with Esperanto dialogue.[62] When reflecting on this development, a spokesperson for Universal pondered if "the English language may at some time be superseded by Esperanto or," better yet, "Filmese."[63]

The notion of "Filmese," while used in jest, reflected the primary criticisms many studio executives had of Esperanto, and explained why they assumed English would triumph as the international language of the screen. Though there were several million Esperanto speakers in the world, this paled in comparison to the number of speakers of any of the major languages in Europe and Asia. In a 1930 volume of the *International Photographer*, a fictitious conversation between two friends mocks the alleged popularity of the language throughout Hollywood:

> Man One: "I suppose some company will be making talkies in Esperanto before long."
> Man Two: "What is Esperanto?"
> Man One: "It's the universal language."
> Man Two: "Whereabouts is it spoken?"
> Man One: "Nowhere."[64]

Because the language was constructed from several others and had no true national origin, critics argued it did not add up to the sum of its parts. It lacked necessary spirit and flair. It was too contrived. Moreover, they resented the fact that most Esperantists were wealthy. Learning the language was a luxury only for the well-to-do. "They should know," *Motion Picture Herald* reported, "the masses do not know about Esperanto."[65] Even if all Hollywood films, many critics argued, featured only English dialogue, this still did not render them inherently less accessible to non-English speakers. According to Irving Thalberg, the true hallmark of a great American film

---

[62] "Production Schedule of the Foreign Production Department," *Paramount Around the World,* September 1, 1929, 4. "Pictorial Section," *Exhibitors Herald*, December 8, 1928, 35.
[63] "Universal Acquires Talking Picture Rights," *Universal Weekly*, November 23, 1929, 11.
[64] Ira, "Hoke-um," *International Photographer*, January 1930, 26.
[65] "Here's a Pipeful," *Motion Picture Herald*, April 22, 1933, 7.

was its ability to express ideas and feelings that resonated with all peoples, not just Americans. Studio filmmakers wanted to capture and depict the universal sensations of love, fear, joy, and suspense without having literally to explain it to their audience. Words would always be secondary to feelings, at least in theory.

Watching and hearing a film was meant to be an experience that overwhelmed the senses and resonated more with the heart than the mind. A film should not serve as a formal language lesson. If the talkies were well-produced and contained a captivating story, one commentator explained, they would still transcend language barriers because they were the "Esperantists of the heart."[66] If the cinema's explicit purpose was to impart a skill to its audience, then the technology would never cultivate international understanding. According to the trade journal *Close Up,* doing so would actually force cinema to slip into irrelevance, as it would become a soulless bore reduced to little more than "the diluted moral Esperanto of other peoples."[67] However, many studio executives figured American films would shatter what was popularly called "the sound barrier" because they tapped into fundamental features of human nature.[68] The studio system's knack for capturing what was universally relatable, despite language, was the essence of "Filmese."

Many movie moguls, particularly Irving Thalberg and Louis Mayer at MGM, believed deeply in the talent of their employees. Despite the claims of Esperanto advocates, they assumed the quality of their work would prove successful enough to convince people both in the United States and elsewhere to learn English. "Esperanto failed," Mayer said plainly. "Just as silent American pictures have popularized American habits, customs, goods, and ideals abroad, so will

[66] "The Educational Influence of Motion Pictures," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* July 1934, 467 "Behind the Whiskers," *Motion Picture Herald,* April 22, 1933, 7.
[67] "As Is," *Close Up*, August 1929, 85.
[68] "Films Must Break Sound Barrier to Spreading Good Will," *Motion Picture Herald*, July 22, 1933, 39.

the American talking picture popularize the English language."[69] Albert Howson, a chief screenwriter and actor at Warner Bros., echoed this sentiment: "There is no doubt in my mind," he declared, "that the talking screen will eventually make English the international language."[70] The spread of English, specifically American English, he figured, would also make it easier for domestic business interests to secure a foothold in foreign markets. Howson celebrated "ours as the international language" instead of the "exaggerated Oxford intonation," because it was not only "the most beautiful and most melodious," but would "benefit trade of every kind and description."[71] The US State Department approved of such ambitious rhetoric because it saw the studio system as a forerunner for the "Americanization" of Europe after World War I. However, this troubled many British producers who considered American English a bastardization of the language and a threat to their longstanding national identity. "The Battle of the Accents," as the press described it, was emblematic of the current state of the Anglo world: the hegemony of the British Empire was waning with the ascent of the technologically savvy United States. Perhaps nowhere was this more apparent than in the cinema. "Are the talkies to go British, or remain Ammurican [sic]," a writer for the popular *Picture Play Magazine* quipped.[72]

Many Hollywood stars assumed the Mid-Atlantic accent would prevail. A blend of standard British and American English pronunciations, the Mid-Atlantic accent was not a native vernacular, but rather a hybrid commonly taught in East Coast boarding schools and in traditional theater companies. It was an extension of Victorian culture and most speakers considered it genteel and symbolic of an upper-class upbringing. Vincent Price and Audrey

[69] "Inside Stuff—Pictures," *Variety*, March 1929, 50.
[70] Douglas Fox, "Look to Hamlet for Cue on How to Make Audiens, Says Howson," *Exhibitors Herald*, May 4, 1929, 28.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Elsi Que, "The Battle of the Accents," *Picture Play Magazine,* November 1929, 20.

Hepburn were the American performers most commonly affiliated with the dialect. However, some studio executives feared that if the accent became too ubiquitous in the cinema, it might, like Esperanto, alienate working-class demographics. One of the films that silenced the sound film debate and proved the marketability of standard American English was *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930).

Based on German author Erich Remarque's best-selling novel of the same name, *All Quiet on the Western Front* is by many accounts the seminal anti-war film and the most influential of the early talkies. The story follows Paul Baumer, played by Lew Ayres, and his close companions as they transform from idealistic schoolchildren to disillusioned soldiers. On the eve of World War I, the young men listen attentively to the patriotic grandstanding of their teacher, Mr. Kantorek, who preaches the glory of fighting for the German Fatherland and even dying in its name. Like James Apperson, the protagonist in *The Big Parade*, Baumer and his friends become infatuated with romanticized conceptions of heroism and enlist in the army. They leap at the opportunity to fight along the Western Front and defend their nation from the tyrannical ambitions of the Entente. Because of the high casualty rates, however, the starry-eyed "soldiers" quickly find themselves appointed to a seasoned unit made up entirely of middle-aged men with no interest in fanning their delusions. Void of food and other basic supplies, Baumer eventually recognizes the root of his seniors' cynicism. Constant bombardment from mortars and machine guns leads the young men to develop depression, alcoholism, and other stress-related ailments. Within a few months, most of Baumer's friends are either killed or maimed in combat.

After securing a temporary release from his commanding officer, Baumer visits home and walks into his old classroom after overhearing Mr. Kantorek propagating the same, enticing rhetoric that had encouraged his enlistment. Kantorek spots Baumer and asks him to tell his class

about the honor of "serving as one of the iron-youth who have made Germany invincible in the field."[73] Taking full-advantage of sound technology, the scene delivers its anti-war message masterfully. Though set in Germany, Ayres plays Baumer without a German or Mid-Atlantic accent, allowing his relatable, mid-Western pronunciation to shine through the screen. Standing before a room full of wide-eyed youths waiting to contribute to what they think will be the final push against the French, Baumer says plainly, "We live in the trenches out there, we fight, try not to be killed. Sometimes we are. That's all." Frustrated with his frankness, Kantorek interjects, "That's not what one dwells on Paul." A look of bitterness grows visibly across Baumer's face as he turns his gaze to Kantorek and looks him square in the eyes: "You still do think it's beautiful and sweet to die for your country, don't you?" Kantorek nods confidently. "We used to think you knew, but the first bombardment taught us better. It's dirty and painful to die for your country. When it comes to dying for your country, it's better not to die at all. There are millions out there dying for their country and what good is it?" His comments enrage the students and they lash out at him for being a "coward" and a "liar." He leaves and is soon stationed back at the Western Front. In the concluding scene, Paul sits miserably inside a claustrophobic trench surrounded by a dusty, lunar-like landscape. He notices a butterfly land slightly beyond his reach. As he repositions himself to touch this one, small beacon of happiness, an enemy sniper shoots him dead. The final image is a composite of a large cemetery and a unit of fresh young recruits marching toward the Front.

Baumer's powerful critique of blind nationalism was effective because the audience could actually hear him defy his former teacher and denounce war. If the audience were to simply read the diatribe on an intertitle, the emotional resonance would diminish considerably.

[73] *All Quiet on the Western Front*. DVD. Directed by Lewis Milestone. Los Angeles: Universal, 1930.

The quiet rage evident in Ayers' performance would be lost. Because the scene contains actual spoken dialogue, it functioned as a call to action for the audience, which partially explains why, despite its depressing ending, *All Quiet on the Western Front* was an enormous critical and commercial success. With a budget of more than one-million dollars, the film was a major risk for Universal Studios, which had struggled for years to keep pace with its larger peers. However, after grossing well over three million dollars in ticket sales, the film reconfirmed the studio's reputation as a major player and established Lewis Milestone as one Hollywood's most talented directors.

Born in Russia (present-day Moldova), Milestone emigrated to the United States just before the outbreak of the war. He then enlisted in the US Signal Corps and developed a knack for shooting and editing films for the military. After the war, he became affiliated with Howard Hughes, who helped him build a career in Hollywood. Though Milestone directed a number of successful films and won an academy award for the comedy *Two Arabian Nights* (1927), it was *All Quiet on the Western Front* that garnered him recognition as a true artist. What made his directorial work in the film so unique was his ability to grasp the emotional power of sound. It was his first talkie and he clearly wanted to make heavy use of this new technology that coupled credible images of war with a strong pacifist message.

Unlike most films of that era, either silent or sound, *All Quiet on the Western Front* does not contain any music. Milestone did not want to sentimentalize the performances with a score. Instead, he relied on the cacophony of war to serve as his soundtrack, which enveloped audiences in realistic recordings of exploding grenades, roaring machine guns, whistling bombs, and screaming soldiers. In the film's most iconic scene, Baumer's unit fends off a violent attack from French forces pushing across No Man's Land. Sweeping crane shots reveal hordes of

young men charging into enemy fodder as the pulsing thunder of high-explosives contrasts sharply with the piercing rattle of machine guns. The overlapping noise is jarring and creates a sense of chaotic dissonance. Coupled with violent images of solders riddling one another with bullets and penetrating one another with bayonets, the experience proved too overwhelming for some viewers. Paul Robinson, a World War I veteran and manager of a Florida theatre, for example, was transported to a hospital following a screening of the film. Crediting his condition to "a return of shell shock," Robinson's unfortunate experience was a testament to the power of sound in film. "When an exhibitor is not shock proof in the presence of the screen," *Motion Picture Herald* reported in response to the incident, "what may one expect of the possibilities of impact on the sensibilities of the layman?"[74] Milestone did not intend to inflict emotional harm on viewers, but he did intend to simulate the source of "shell shock" by engrossing them in the sights and sounds of active combat, which, for at least one veteran, were all too familiar.

Upon release, critics almost unanimously praised how the film's sound design contributed to it pacifist message. Even critics who had pined for the end of talkies since the release of the *Jazz Singer* celebrated it as a tremendous achievement. Roy Winton, chief reviewer for the journal *Movie Makers*, admitted plainly that he had disapproved of all sound films until he saw *All Quiet on the Western Front*:

> Universal and Lewis Milestone have done the precise thing that this reviewer had predicted could never be done. They have made a talking movie that is packed full of cinematic quality and have mixed that quality so thoroughly into the substance of the photoplay that one cannot segregate those parts that are talkie and those that are motion picture art.[75]

Because of its powerful spoken dialogue and atmospheric sound effects, the film, Winton believed, actually exceeded Remarque's novel in recreating the brutal reality of the trenches and

[74] "The Power of the Medium," *Motion Picture Herald,* August 1, 1931, 7.
[75] Roy Winton, "Photoplayfare," *Movie Makers*, July 1930, 429.

in stirring anti-war sentiment. The reviewer for the popular magazine *Screenland* similarly acknowledged the film as a turning point for talkies. "Don't go to be entertained," the reviewer cautioned, "prepare to be shocked … it is the best of arguments for peace."[76] The film's producers parroted such rhetoric and embraced the fact that Benito Mussolini, fearing it might incite resentment against his growing military, had it banned from screening in Italy.[77] Studio executives at Universal treated Mussolini's decision as a badge of honor. It was a testament to the film's persuasive power. Marketing the film as a direct challenge to war propaganda, Universal dubbed it "the greatest antidote to war which has ever been placed on the motion picture screen, or has ever been held up to mankind as a human document of what war really is."[78] Milestone operated under the assumption that if audiences could *see* and *hear* what war was really like, then they would not be as susceptible to the belligerent hysteria that swept across the United States and Europe between 1914 and 1918. He figured peace was not necessarily an extension of understanding the customs of other peoples, as many advocates of the Pax Cinemana professed, but rather understanding the nature of modern, technological warfare. A glowing review in *Variety* best summed up how the film's financial worth overlapped with its political potential. As *Variety* noted, the film was

> so compelling in its realism, bigness, and repulsiveness [that] the League of Nations could make no better investment than to buy the master print, reproduce it in every language for every nation to be shown every year until the word War shall have been taken out of the dictionaries.[79]

After its initial release, *All Quiet on the Western Front* did indeed screen routinely in a variety of theaters for nearly a decade. It became the unofficial film of Armistice Day and many

[76] "Best Pictures," *Screenland*, August, 1930, 85. "All Quiet on the Western Front Thills 'Em," *Hollywood Filmograph*, April 26, 1930, 18.
[77] Adolph Hitler would later do the same in Germany.
[78] "For Films Whose Timeliness will Make Money for Exhibitors," *Universal Weekly*, February 24, 1934, 12.
[79] "Film Reviews: All Quiet on the Western Front," *Variety*, May 7, 1930, 21.

exhibitors made it a tradition to screen it every November 11 for the public or private veterans groups.[80] Like *The Big Parade*, the film also generated attention from leading researchers interested in studying the influence of anti-war films on the public. Abbott Lowell, President of Harvard University, and William Short, Secretary of the New York Peace Society, created the Motion Picture Research Council to partake in such efforts.[81] Between 1929 and 1931, the Motion Picture Research Council conducted a series of experiments with some of the most renowned sociologists and psychologists in the United States. Their goal was to measure the effect a single film can have on the youth. In one study, over two hundred high-school students in Paxton, Illinois participated in a survey that asked about their attitude toward war. To gauge if the students had a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward war, they were instructed to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with thirty-two provided statements. The statements included, "War is hardly necessary in the modern world"; War is glorious"; "War should be avoided at any cost"; and "War stimulates men to their noblest efforts."[82] Nine days after completing the survey, they watched *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930). The following day, they completed the survey again. The study concluded, "The change in the children's attitude toward war as a result of seeing the film is very evident … the change is in the direction of pacifism."[83]

Francis Onderdonk, a professor of architecture at the University of Michigan, also had a keen interest in the film. However, he thought the best way to appreciate its influence was to take it outside of research institutions and directly to the public. For nearly a decade, Onderdonk traveled the country in his "Peacemobile" and held local screenings of *All Quiet on the Western*

[80] "Armistice Day Suggestions," *Universal Weekly,* November 5, 1932, 6. Louis Bailey, "Educational Films," *Movie Makers*, November 1930, 696.
[81] "William H. Short," *Motion Picture Herald,* January 19, 1935, 52.
[82] Ruth Peterson, L.L. Thurstone, *Motion Pictures and the Social Attitudes of Children* (New York City, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 26-28.
[83] Ibid.

Front and other anti-war films in parks, schools, YMCAs, and other community centers.[84] The Peacemobile was an automobile modified to function as a traveling micro-cinema. The vehicle accommodated a 16mm projector, speakers, and screen. Onderdonk customized the vehicle's trunk so it could hold a projector mount that extended approximately fifty feet from the rear bumper. The screen, which stood about eight feet tall and eight feet wide, extended above the front windshield. Running along the sides of the screen were the flags of dozens of countries. According to Onderdonk, "Motion pictures are the most powerful of all means for molding mankind. … It is the most scientific, energy-saving way to spread ideas."[85] His ideas were always of the pacifist variety and, between 1930 and the onset of World War II, Onderdonk screened peace films like *All Quiet on the Western Front* for over 100,000 individuals.

President of Universal Studios, Carl Laemmle appreciated the warm reception of *All Quiet on the Western Front* and was thrilled that viewers treated it as an instrument of peace. Laemmle was nearing retirement during its initial theatrical run and wanted the film to serve as his swan song, a positive and thought-provoking parting gift for an industry he had helped build. "If I fail to make a dollar on [it]," Laemmle remarked, "I shall be satisfied if it contributes to world peace."[86] The influence of the film on peace advocates brought him great pleasure. Before the outbreak of World War I, Laemmle had been an ardent pacifist and championed the spread of universal human rights. When an Ohio-based newspaper recommended that Laemmle should be considered as a serious candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, he hired celebrated English poet John Drinkwater to write his official biography, *The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle*. One of the book's concluding chapters reprints the Peace Prize recommendation in its entirety:

[84] Josephine Hoffman, "News and Notes: Peace Films Caravan," *The Educational Screen*, March 1938, 96.
[85] Josephine Hoffman, "Motion Pictures Promote Peace," *The Educational Screen*, May 1936, 150.
[86] "Laemmle Flay "Experts"; Off Costume Films," *Motion Picture News*, July 19, 1930, 27.

> Three times the prize has come to America; in 1906 to Theodore Roosevelt, in 1912 to Elihu Root, and in 1918 to Woodrow Wilson. Statesmen, all of these men, and perhaps it does appear to be a far cry from them to Carl Laemmle. But it really isn't. It was Carl Laemmle who made it possible for the world to see *All Quiet on the Western Front* and nothing has ever been done by statesmen wearing the halo of presidential or kingly favor [that] has been more potent in pointing out the devastating horrors of world war. And why, therefore, should not Carl Laemmle have the Nobel Peace Prize? Rightly they may ask what Roosevelt or Root or Wilson and any of the rest of the foreign gentlemen who have been awarded the prize, ever did more for the peace of the world than Carl Laemmle has with *Western Front*.[87]

The release of the biography was an obvious ploy by Laemmle to shape his own legacy and generate support for a Peace Prize nomination. It was a perfect example of self-made hagiography. However, it did reflect how the public perception of motion pictures had changed since the late nineteenth century. Because Laemmle played a crucial role in building the studio system and used it to release films with strong anti-war sentiments, he was lionized by more than one reporter as a legitimate purveyor of world peace. Motion pictures, a technology that was only a few decades earlier treated as little more than a "toy," had become the bedrock of a profitable industry and powerful communication system that preached the inherent folly of war.

[87] John Drinkwater, *The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), 276-277.

Chapter Two

"The Pictures that will Stop this War": Rethinking Henry Ford's Peace Ship and Fleeting Film Empire

On the afternoon of May 7, 1915, a German U-boat fired one torpedo at the hull of the *RMS Lusitania*, a British ocean liner carrying nearly two thousand passengers, approximately eleven miles off the coast of Ireland. Several months earlier, German officials had dubbed the area disputed and stated repeatedly that German submarines were willing to strike if British ships continued to pass through it. Despite the warnings, the *Lusitania* forged ahead undeterred until commander Walther Schwieger of the Imperial German Navy ordered the attack. The torpedo hit starboard side and compromised the integrity of the ship's bow, forcing it underwater in only eighteen minutes. Because the ship sank so rapidly, passengers struggled to dispatch lifeboats. Hundreds of passengers drowned or died of hypothermia in the frigid Atlantic waters, including wealthy industrialist Alfred Vanderbilt and the famous playwright Charles Klein. Of the 1,198 passengers that had lost their lives, 128 were American citizens.

The sinking of the *Lusitania* infuriated politicians who had promoted American neutrality throughout the preceding months. The media took aim at Germany's clandestine tactics and condemned them as perverse and even illegal. The event proved to be perfect fodder for newsreel cameramen who quickly turned their gaze to the hundreds of memorials organized for those who had perished, particularly notable people like Vanderbilt. Though the actual sinking was never photographed, cartoonist Winsor McCay spent nearly two years recreating the event in a powerful animated propaganda film based on first-person interviews. Hailed as "the only record of the crime that shocked humanity," the film inspired discussion over the ethics of using motion

pictures to produce allegedly "authentic" accounts of historical events that had no visible record.[1] William Randolph Hearst, who had employed McCay several years earlier to provide illustrations for his newspapers, criticized the film for stirring support for a war he vehemently opposed.

The film did resonate, however, with former president Theodore Roosevelt and his Preparedness Movement, a coalition of politicians and activists who had petitioned the Woodrow Wilson administration to expand the United States' naval and military capabilities for self-defense purposes. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, they assumed, was precisely what they needed to win favor from Wilson and Congress. In addition, the event turned Roosevelt into an avid cinephile, forcing him to recognize the rousing potential of propaganda films. In fact, Roosevelt was so enamored by the efficacy of motion pictures in aiding his Preparedness Movement that he served as an adviser on the infamous *The Battle Cry of Peace* (1915), the most controversial film of the war. *The Battle Cry of Peace* portrays American pacifists as clandestine moles working with the Central Powers to undermine the United States' military. In the film, after the United States proves itself unable to defend its borders, the Central Powers invade the East Coast, raze New York City, and burn the White House to the ground. Roosevelt read the initial screenplay and offered his own embellishments and believed the film would "arouse in the heart of every American citizen a sense of his strict accountability to his government in time of need."[2] Moreover, Roosevelt used his military connections to convince acting Major-General Leonard Wood, Commander of the Army of the East, to lend soldiers and supplies as extras and props in

[1] "Jewel Press Sheet for "The Sinking of the Lusitania"," *The Moving Picture Weekly*, 27 July 1918, 6-7.
[2] J. Stuart Blackton, "The Battle Cry of Peace," *Motion Picture Magazine*, September 1915, 122-123.

the film. "I advocate military preparedness," Roosevelt exclaimed with his characteristic robustness, "not for the sake of war, but for the sake of safeguarding this nation against war."[3]

Equating militarism with peacekeeping was simply absurd to the thousands of American pacifists who had protested against America's entry into the global arms race. Pacifist groups had found themselves in the crosshairs of Roosevelt and his supporters, such as the Women's Peace Party and the New York Peace Society, and were quick to challenge their interpretation of "preparedness." Preparedness, they argued, did not translate to self-defense and was merely the preferred euphemism for warmongers committed to sending hordes of young American men into the trenches. For several months, the public and the press debated how the United States should respond to the *Lusitania* tragedy. As the debate raged on, interest in the war grew, stimulating the motion picture industry to produce more stylized war films. President Wilson was suspicious of defensive militarism but certainly did not want to appear weak in the wake of German aggression. Soon Wilson found himself receiving diplomatic advice from an unusual source: automobile tycoon and aspiring movie mogul Henry Ford.

Ford was an outspoken critic of the war and initially opposed any intervention from the United States. After the sinking of the *Lusitania,* he and several prominent peace activists organized an unofficial diplomatic mission to create a conference for neutral powers at The Hague. The ultimate goal was to persuade the war's belligerents into brokering a peace treaty. An ocean liner, which the press called the Peace Ship, transported Ford and his anti-war cohorts to Europe where they attempted unsuccessfully to meet with influential statesmen. The press widely ridiculed the expedition and lambasted Ford as naive and eccentric.

[3] Theodore Roosevelt, *The Writings of Theodore Roosevelt,* January 10, 1917, Harbaugh, William, ed. (New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Company), 385.

Scholars have also pegged the Peace Ship expedition as an immense failure. Leading biographer Steven Watts, for example, claimed it was "one of the most embarrassing episodes in Ford's life."[4] Watts suggested that the plan was premature and felt like an introduction to something that never came into fruition. Though the initiative did not achieve its stated aims, it did highlight Ford's arrival as a significant figure in the motion picture industry and did represent his first contribution to the Pax Cinemana. Ford was an unlikely advocate for motion pictures but he believed genuinely that they could help bring a permanent end to war.

Ford's illustrious career as an automobile manufacturer is widely known, but scholars have largely ignored his contributions to cinema. Conventional histories of Ford usually explore his Model T as the most popular automobile in the United States and his auto factory as the embodiment of American technological know-how. By 1913, a small team of workers at Ford's Highland Park plant could assemble a complete Model T in less than two hours. The enthusiasm for automobiles even trumped that of motion pictures. An advertisement for stock in the Sunbeam Motion Picture Corporation, one of New York City's many independent production houses, made this clear: "The Motion-picture business," it declared confidently, "has become second only to the automobile in its amazing evolution from scientific toy to NECESSITY."[5] Surprisingly, scholars have neglected Ford's filmmaking career, which is unusual because in 1915 he operated the single largest motion picture production and distribution house in the world, rivaling every major Hollywood studio.[6] Leading historians Stephen Watts and Richard Snow, for example, never even mention Ford's filmmaking career in their groundbreaking

[4] Steven Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2005), 228.
[5] "Ten Years Ago the Motion Picture was a Child's Toy!" *The Gazette Times*, July 12, 1916, 3.
[6] Phillip Stewart, "Henry Ford: Movie Mogul? A Titan of Industry Conquers Filmdom," *Prologue*, 2014. Available at: archives.gov (accessed April 5, 2017).

biographies. Besides archivist Phillip Stewart's important *Investigator's Guide to the Films Produced by the Ford Motor Company*, researchers have overlooked the topic almost entirely.[7] The motion picture department of the Ford Motor Company is rarely mentioned alongside the Hollywood giants such as Fox, Paramount, RKO, Warner Bros., and Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer. However, its influence in making motion pictures a central feature of modern life was clearly significant. Whereas Hollywood's Big Five were economic powerhouses that promoted cinema as constructive entertainment, the Ford Motor Company promoted it as a means of industrial and social welfare.

Ford's tenure with motion pictures reveals a great deal about film's application to everyday life. Before World War I, motion pictures were not widely considered a sophisticated art or a particularly profitable business venture. Films were considered cheap novelties that appealed primarily to the crude tastes of the working class. The expansion of cinema during World War I triggered a shift in the popular perception of motion pictures by demonstrating their practical capabilities on the battlefield and their ability to shape public opinion. Filmmakers and big business took note, and after 1914, much to their interrelated efforts, motion pictures would gradually permeate all facets of daily life, forcing reporters and the public to embrace their staying power. Ford was in the vanguard of this movement and his direct impact on the integration of motion pictures into American industry cannot be overstated. This chapter rethinks the Peace Ship voyage as a filmmaking effort that spurred Ford's overlooked and underappreciated attempts to use motion pictures to improve his factories and foster an enduring world peace between 1914 and 1925. It analyzes how Ford conceived of peace and its relationship to American technology and manufacturing.

[7] Philip Stewart, Henry Ford's Moving Picture Show: *Investigator's Guide to the Films Produced by the Ford Motor, Volume One, 1914-1920* (Crestview, FL: PMS Press, 2011).

…….

Henry Ford's first encounters with the power of film dates back to the eve of World War I, when he watched several guest filmmakers record the inner-workings of his Highland Park Plant. The event inspired him to use motion pictures to help train workers and improve efficiency. He sought the advice of his close friend Thomas Edison who had agreed to tutor him on the fundamentals of motion picture technology. Edison validated his decision to develop a motion picture department and appoint Ambrose Jewett—head of advertising at the Ford Motor Company—to oversee the operation. Besides using the motion picture department to improve the manufacturing process, Jewett also pushed it into the bourgeoning newsreel business and helped cement it as formidable competitor to the more widely known Pathe and Paramount studios. As tensions mounted in Europe after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Ford gradually recognized his film department as an instrument of peace.

Ford first entered the mainstream peace debate when he provided the most widely discussed rebuttal to Roosevelt and his Preparedness Movement in an extended interview with *The Detroit Free Press.* Ford wanted to vent his frustrations with the ongoing war in Europe and sway Wilson to embrace the calls for peace despite the sinking of the *Lusitania*. According to Ford, "preparedness has never prevented war, but has ever brought war to the world."[8] Ford loathed not only the grotesque nature of trench combat but also its glamorous depiction in popular films. "For months," Ford argued, "the people of the United States have had fear pounded into their brain by motion pictures."[9] He saw the war as a useless barrier to material and political progress. Because it disrupted the international flow of industrial production, he insisted

[8] "Henry Ford to Push World-Wide Campaign for Universal Peace," *The Detroit Free Press,* August, 22, 1915.
[9] Henry Ford, "Humanity and Insanity," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 11, 1916, 13.

that all parties involved merited public condemnation. "I hate war," Ford exclaimed bluntly, "because war is murder, desolation, and destruction … heartless to those of the human race who do not want it, the countless millions, the workers."[10] Leading newspaper outlets reprinted Ford's frank assessment of the conflict throughout the country, immediately bringing it to the attention of prominent pacifists in search of sympathetic businessmen.

Only a few months earlier, pacifists from around the world had convened at The Hague for the first World Peace Congress. The goal was to bring about an immediate arbitration between European statesmen and create an action plan to discourage future arms races. By bringing together nearly 1,200 delegates from over one dozen countries, the Peace Congress represented a "who's who" of the anti-war movement. The names of celebrated religious, labor, and feminist figures dominated the attendee list, including Anita Augspurg, Lida Gustava Heymann, Aletta Jacobs, and Emily Balch. Jane Addams—influential social reformer and civil rights icon—represented the American delegation and worked closely with Louis Lochner—journalist and executive director of the Emergency Peace Federation—to develop ideas to avoid American military expansion. Not surprisingly, Theodore Roosevelt mocked the event publicly in a lengthy diatribe that lambasted participants as "silly, base, noxious, futile, cowardly, illogical, weak minded, hypocritical, evil, and hysterical."[11] To Roosevelt, these men and women were the real-life incarnations of the villains in his beloved *The Battle Cry of Peace*. Addams and Lochner understood that many Americans shared Roosevelt's cynical interpretation of their pacifist message. As a result, they convened with Jewish-Hungarian women's rights activist Rosika Schwimmer to discuss plans for expanding outreach and attracting greater attention from

[10] "Henry Ford to Push World-Wide Campaign for Universal Peace," *The Detroit Free Press,* August 22, 1915.
[11] "Roosevelt Letter on Women's Peace Party Stirs Wrath," *The Evening World*, April 16, 1915, 12.

the Wilson administration. When Ford expressed his opposition to the war in *The Detroit Free Press*, this new triumvirate for peace immediately spotted an ally.

Addams, Lochner, and Schwimmer understood fully that if they were going to have any chance of brokering a peace treaty between belligerent nations or forming an alliance between neutral nations, they needed to think beyond the confines of traditional statecraft. Will power and good intentions, they assumed, could only take them so far. An enduring peace would require money and unprecedented recognition, which in 1915 were synonymous with Henry Ford. Ford was without a doubt one of the most popular Americans in the world. His name was fixed to mass production and the assembly line, which reporters celebrated routinely as a testament to the United States' unparalleled efficiency. Addams, Lochner, and Schwimmer consequently viewed Ford as a fellow champion of the Progressive Era. His emphasis on how the working class would suffer disproportionately if the United States were to enter the war echoed the concerns of those who had attended the Peace Congress at The Hague. Due to Addams' reputation and extensive connections, Schwimmer and Lochner made contact with Ford's secretaries and organized a meeting at his manor in Dearborn, Michigan.

After a brief jaunt around Ford's illustrious property, Lochner and Schwimmer floated their idea to Ford about the need for an ongoing neutrality conference at The Hague. The conference, spearheaded by delegates from the United States, would remain in session until all European states could agree to an armistice. As the most powerful industrial nation in the world, in addition to its highly publicized neutral status, the United States, Ford agreed, had the responsibility to unite neutral nations and broker a peace treaty between the Central Powers and the Entente. They knew President Wilson was eager for mediation talks and were hopeful that with Ford's financial backing and celebrity status, they could convince Wilson to support the

initiative. After a brief deliberation, Ford, Lochner, and Schwimmer agreed to travel to New York City and Washington D.C. to promote their idea to both the press and the President.

At the end of November, while en route to New York City, Ford and Lochner noticed a series of promotional posters for *The Battle Cry for Peace*. According to Lochner's account, Ford scoffed at the gaudy advertisements. "I'll certainly tell the newspaper boys what I think of *that* play."[12] *The Battle Cry for Peace* was based on the popular book *Defenseless America* by Hudson Maxim. Maxim was a chemist credited with inventing smokeless gunpowder and an array of explosives used extensively throughout the war. Maxim's brother, Hiram Stevens Maxim, invented the Maxim gun, the world's first practical, self-powered machine gun. Variations of their weapons were ubiquitous throughout the trenches as belligerents from each side volleyed explosives and bullets back and forth for months, leading to deadly stalemates. Together they helped revolutionize modern warfare and indirectly contributed to the deaths of millions. Consequently, the Maxim name was synonymous with munitions manufacturing in the United States. Hudson Maxim's company, the Maxim Munitions Corporation, profited handsomely from the war. According to Ford, Maxim, who had actually made an appearance in *The Battle Cry for Peace*, was using the film to carry "his poison of fear into every part of the Union to make a market for his goods."[13]

Ford went as far as to take out a full-page proclamation in several major newspapers condemning *The Battle Cry for Peace* and other films like it. After openly criticizing what he considered an exploitative relationship between the military and the motion picture industry, Ford attacked the film, a major hit for the influential Vitagraph Company, as nothing but "plain

[12] Louis Lochner, Henry Ford: America's Don Quixote (New York City, NY: International Publishers, 1925), 18.
[13] Henry Ford, "Humanity and Insanity," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 11, 1916, 13.

propaganda for the professional war merchants and munitions makers."[14] James Blackton—silent film pioneer and founder of Vitagraph—took Ford's comments personally and retaliated with a partially successful libel suit against Ford for one million dollars.[15] "Every sane man wants peace," Blackton rebuked, "but the man who preaches against patriotism is beneath contempt and not entitled to manhood suffrage."[16] By 1915, Ford's views on motion pictures had become closely intertwined with his views on politics and business. And, after discussing with Lochner and Schwimmer the need for a neutral conference at The Hague, Ford saw an opportunity to project an image of himself and his company as dignified pilgrims for peace throughout every movie theater in the country.

Once arriving at their accommodations in New York City, Ford, Lochner and Schwimmer discussed how to best implement their peace plan in ways that seized public attention. Lochner suggested somewhat in jest that a special ship could transport the delegates from the United States to Norway before embarking for The Hague. The idea of such a trip intrigued Ford, who, according to Lochner, "had a native instinct for publicity."[17] Conceptually, the voyage was incredibly cinematic and perfect for newsreels. Images of conferences and mediation talks made for rather dull viewing. However, a ship filled with influential Americans sailing gallantly across the Atlantic with a message of world peace was dramatic and memorable. It stressed action over rhetoric. This appealed mightily to Ford, who had insisted on *doing* something to end the war rather than simply talking about it.[18] Ford left the details of the trip to

[14] "The Battle Cry for Peace," *Photoplay,* November 1924, 115.
[15] "Vitagraph Beats Ford," *Motography*, May 12, 1917, 981.
[16] "Ford Asks Transfer of Film Suit," *Motography,* September 9, 1916, 599.
[17] Lochner, 20.
[18] Ibid.

his secretaries, who quickly organized a plan to use the *Oscar II*, a Scandinavian America Line steamship, to set sail from New York City to Oslo, Norway on December 4, 1915.

Equipped with a ship and an experienced crew, Ford, Lochner, and Schwimmer hurried to assemble delegates. Because Ford was already an acquaintance on good terms with President Wilson and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, he figured he could recruit them to join their voyage and reinforce its legitimacy. After exchanging brief pleasantries at the White House, Ford told Wilson bluntly, "I have today chartered a steamship. I offer it to you to send delegates to Europe. If you feel you can't act, I will."[19] Much to Ford's chagrin, Wilson declined his "invitation," claiming that as president he had a responsibility to keep his options open to all suggestions for peace. In reality, Wilson had already begun formulating a plan to concede to the pressures of the Preparedness Movement and invest heavily in redeveloping the military. Even though the United States would not officially join the war until April 6, 1917, Wilson wanted to ensure that the American military could successfully thwart a full-scale German attack. William Jennings Bryan, one of the most outspoken pacifists in the country, followed suit with Wilson and also declined to participate. Though they both offered some parting words of good fortune, Wilson and Bryan's absence was a major blow. Bryan was exceptionally popular among European diplomats and his lack of participation imbued the voyage with an impending sense of failure.

Despite the setback, Ford invited representatives from over forty newspapers to gather at his hotel in New York City. The media had been buzzing for days because of Ford's meeting at the White House and his intermittent insistence that he was preparing something "big."[20] In a crowded room of attentive reporters, Ford promoted his upcoming voyage across the Atlantic as

[19] Lochner, 24.
[20] Lochner, 21.

an attempt to "get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas." These words appeared on the front page of dozens of newspapers and became the unofficial slogan for what the press dubbed the "Peace Ship."[21]

The public's initial response to the Peace Ship was mixed. Many treated it as an extension of the social activism that had characterized the Progressive Era, while others dismissed it as pointless advertising for the Ford Motor Company.[22] *The New York Times*, for example, discussed Ford as both courageous and painfully naive.[23] Without Wilson and Bryan, Ford struggled to garner the full approval of the press. As a result, he sent Schwimmer and Lochner scrambling to find popular delegates only eleven days before their scheduled departure. Schwimmer sent an invitation to the governor of every American state as well as to prominent figures in pacifist and suffragist circles. Within only a few days, at least twelve governors had declined to participate.[24] So too had several leading social reformers, including Jane Addams. Of the fifty-one official delegates to embark on the Peace Ship, Louis Hana, Governor of North Dakota, and Helen Ring Robinson, Colorado State Senator, were the only elected officials. Yet, Schwimmer and Lochner did bring influential persons to their ranks, including notable progressives like labor lawyer Inez Milholland, Unitarian minister Jenkin Lloyd Jones, and feminist Lola Maverick Lloyd. Even so, the Peace Ship certainly did not have anywhere near the number of statesmen needed to "get the boys out of the trenches."

In follow up interviews, Ford admitted that he had never actually believed he could end the war in only a few weeks. His real goal, he insisted, was changing the conversation from war

[21] "Ford Hires Liner in Peace Crusade," *The New York Times*, November 25, 1915, 1-2.
[22] "Where is the Star?" *Motion Picture News,* December 31, 1915, 298. "Topics of the Times," *The New York Times,* December 2, 1915, 10.
[23] "Topics of the Times," *The New York Times*, December 2, 1915, 10.
[24] Jane Addams, one of the original architects of the initiative, refused to join on account of contracting influenza.

to peace. According to Ford, the Peace Ship was not a publicity stunt, but a sincere attempt to fight the Preparedness Movement by forcing the idea of peace to the forefront of the public's attention.[25] As an outspoken critic of propaganda films like *The Battle Cry of Peace*, Ford figured he too could use motion pictures to sway public opinion.

In addition to inviting forty reporters, including a correspondent for *Moving Picture Weekly*, to accompany him on the Peace Ship, Ford also financed four newsreel cameramen.[26] Why Ford did not have anyone from his own motion picture department participate in the Peace Ship is unknown, but he probably did not want to validate his critics' perception of the initiative as little more than an extended advertisement for Model Ts. Bringing aboard a personal film crew to document their activities would have certainly raised questions over the authenticity of any footage slated for exhibition. Yet, he still managed to assemble a team of experienced filmmakers from major film industry companies like Universal Moving Picture Company and Mutual Film Corporation.[27]

News of Ford's embrace of motion pictures made its way into various trade journals and came to the attention of Pathe studios. Pathe was about to release the three-reel documentary *The Horrors of War* (1916), a powerful account of Russia's violent skirmishes with Turkish forces along the Black Sea. Ford was invited to a special screening of the film only a few days before embarking for Norway.[28] Taking advantage of the Peace Ship's substantial press coverage, Pathe likely figured that endorsements from Ford would bolster ticket sales. Though one might consider *The Horrors of War* an example of peace propaganda, it was a radical departure from

---

[25] Henry Ford, Samuel Crowther, *My Life and Work* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), 245. Lochner 48.
[26] "Just to Make Talk," *Motion Picture News,* January 1, 1916, 78.
[27] "Tells about Peace Trip," *Motography,* Janurary, 1916, 524. "Joseph T. Rucker, Universal's Forder," *The Moving Picture World*, December 18, 1915, 2194.
[28] "Horrors of War from Pathe Freres on January 24," *Motion Picture News*, January 22, 1916, 352.

the exploitative and thematically explicit *The Battle Cry of Peace.* After viewing the film, Ford described its content accurately:

> The other day a moving picture plant showed me a picture of war. I saw a field covered with dead. Wounded men were kicking in agony. Other men came on and stripped them of their clothes. Then came wagons and the dead and half dead were piled on like so much cordwood. If pictures like that would be shown to the people, war would be stopped.[29]

The surviving extant footage from the film shows that its primary focus was the human cost of war. Most of the film is a dizzying montage of corpses lining the roads of small Turkish villages in the midst of winter. The contrast between the dark mounds of bodies and the fresh white snow is striking and disturbing. The film never veers into trite sentimentalism and maintains a fly-on-the-wall aesthetic reminiscent of *cinema verite*. Critics praised the film for its frank and honest depiction of what was happening overseas. Instead of including blurbs of praise from critics, however, advertisements for the film included a straightforward quotation from Ford: "The pictures that will stop this war."[30]

When the Peace Ship finally set sail on December 4, 1915, over ten thousand spectators and well-wishers had gathered at the docks to it bid farewell. The United States was still more than a year away from officially entering the war, but the public still grieved for those fighting in Europe. Newsreel cameras captured energetic crowds playing anti-war anthems like "Tell the Boys it is Time to Come Home" and brandishing signs with the words "Peace at any Price." One reporter called the event "one of the most picturesque, as well as noisy, demonstrations ever witnessed in New York Harbor."[31] Even William Jennings Bryan made an impromptu appearance and praised the ship as the modern equivalent of Noah's ark. While many were

[29] "The Horrors of War," *The Indianapolis News,* January 22, 1916, 13.
[30] "The Horrors of War," *The Indianapolis News,* January 22, 1916, 13.
[31] "Peace Ark Starts; Ford is Buoyant," *The New York Times*, December 5, 1915, 1-3.

supportive, others attended simply to scoff at what British newspapers had recently titled the "Ship of Fools."[32]

In the preceding days, the media had become increasingly vindictive toward Ford and the Peace Ship. Alton Parker, a New York Judge and former presidential candidate, likened Ford to "a clown strutting on the stage."[33] Others took aim at Ford's last minute attempt to encourage gifted university students to abandon their studies and join the cause. James Day, Chancellor of Syracuse University, refused to pass Ford's invitation along to any students, claiming that it was a "grotesque plan that will accomplish nothing but the ridicule of your country."[34] The event even bore some semblance of the Atlantic City boardwalk when popular astrologer and fortune-teller Gustave Meyer "predicted" that the stars were not aligned in the Peace Ship's favor. "The peace cruise is destined to fail," Meyer prophesized ominously, noting that "the evil planet Mars was posted in the fifth mansion of the heavens as the *Oscar II* backed into the river."[35] Adding to the absurdity, Lawrence Darmour, a newsreel cameraman for *Mutual Weekly*, noted that someone left a cage full of squirrels at the dock with a sign reading "To the Good Ship Nutty."[36] Despite it all, Ford and Lochner publicly defended the plan, insisting that reporters were committed to publishing only the "yellowest" kind of reception in order to smear their campaign.[37]

Once on the open ocean, however, Ford's optimism faded. Only three days into the voyage, Ford and his cohorts listened to a radio broadcast of President Wilson addressing

---

[32] "Dubbed Ship of Fools, *The New York Times,* December 4, 1915, 2.
[33] "Ford Defies His Critics," *The New York Times,* December 2, 1915, 2.
[34] "Grotesque, says J.R. Day," *The New York Times*, December 1, 1915, 3.
[35] "Ford's Life in Peril; Peace Ship Doomed to Failure; War Won't End Till 1917," *The Day Book,* December 13, 1915, 9.
[36] "Tells about Peace Trip," *Motography,* January 1916, 524.
[37] Lochner, 48.

Congress and detailing his plans to expand the United States military. "Preparation for defense," Wilson said plainly, "seems to me to be absolutely imperative now."[38] For the delegates aboard the Peace Ship, the words pierced like a dagger. Wilson had finally caved to the rabid demands of the Preparedness Movement. With each individual having a seemingly conflicting plan to respond to Wilson's decision, a heated debate erupted between the delegates. They all assumed correctly that Wilson's remarks would instigate the United States' gradual march to the trenches. According to Lochner, the newspaper reporters leapt "like a pack of hungry wolves" to detail the internal strife.[39] Within one week, dozens of major newspapers were mocking the ironic "War on Ford's Peace Ship."[40] Even though the newsreel cameramen neglected to capture any of the on-ship drama, film critics still chimed in, citing Mack Sennett's latest work as "some of the best comedy scenes since Henry Ford's peace ship."[41]

Matters continued to take a turn for the worse when Ford contracted influenza several days later. The illness rendered him incapacitated in his private cabin. Since Ford isolated himself, rumors began to spread that he might have passed away. Once the ship arrived in Oslo on December 18, Ford fled to his hotel and only intermittently spoke with his colleagues or the press. Heeding the advice of his wife and secretaries, Ford left the group in secret on Christmas Eve and boarded a passenger liner en route to New York City. When Lochner, Schwimmer, and the rest of the peace delegates arrived in Sweden on Christmas morning, they all reconciled

[38] Woodrow Wilson: "Third Annual Message," December 7, 1915. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. Available at: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29556 (accessed May 7, 2017).
[39] Lochner, 72.
[40] Carolyn Wilson, "War on Ford's Peace Ship," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 20, 1915, 1. "Autocratic Leader Split Ford's Party," *The New York Times*, January 31, 1916, 2.
[41] "Editor Praises "Giggle Foundry," *Motography,* January 6, 1917, 43.

themselves to the fact that Ford had abandoned them. Not only had they not gotten "the boys out of the trenches," but they were also without their leader.[42]

Without Ford, the media's interest in the initiative diminished quickly. Once the activities of the Peace Ship stopped making headlines, the newsreel cameramen left on other assignments. Lawrence Darmour of *Mutual Weekly*, for example, followed the party to Copenhagen, but left to shoot skiing competitions instead.[43] Others, like Joseph Rucker of *Universal Weekly*, became frustrated when government officials prohibited them from bringing their equipment into Germany while traveling through to The Hague.[44] The challenging logistics of moving film stock during wartime, coupled with waning interest among the public, forced most newsreel cameramen to leave the peace party by late January. Even though the expedition eventually held a peace conference with a few official representatives from Sweden, Norway, and Finland, this did little to end the war. By the end of 1916, the expedition had fallen into obscurity.

Ford continued to fund the operation until he abruptly withdrew all support for it in February 1917. When Woodrow Wilson made it clear that America's entry into the war was inevitable, Ford reluctantly agreed to throw the support of his company behind the Allied war effort. "If this war is to be won," Ford contended, "it will be won by the nation that knows best how to use tools and machinery [and] knows the secret of quantity production through standardization."[45] In spite of his opposition to war, Ford played an influential role in World War I. His company mass-produced the Liberty Engine, which powered the bulk of the Allies' aircraft and supplied British farmers with much needed tractors. In addition, Ford filled the front lines with Model Ts, the most widely used vehicle throughout the conflict. Ford's motion picture

[42] Lochner, 85-90.
[43] "Tells about Peace Trip," *Motography,* January 1916, 524.
[44] "Cameraman Rucker Back From Europe," *Motion Picture News*, February 26, 1916, 1130.
[45] "Standardize Models, Advises Henry Ford," *Evening Public Ledger*, January 16, 1918, 25.

department captured all of these activities in newsreel footage, which became a popular source of correspondence on the domestic front and promoted the role of Ford Motors in supporting the Allied cause.

The decision to convert his factories into armories deeply disturbed Lochner, Schwimmer, and the other peace delegates. "Henry Ford deserted his ship," Lochner remarked, "abandoned was his pacifism … abandoned were his views against 'preparedness' and militarism."[46] Speculating on what could have provoked Ford to dismiss his pledge to peace, Locher assumed that his associates had told him "the interests of his business were permanently threatened by the nature of his peace propaganda."[47] To save his business, Lochner surmised, Ford believed he had to drop his pacifism. On the surface, Lochner's assessment of Ford's decision to support the war effort made sense. However, a closer inspection of Ford's treatment of war and peace reveals that Lochner had misinterpreted Ford's worldview from the start. Ford's understanding of world peace, as well as his understanding of how it could be obtained, was fundamentally different from that of orthodox pacifists like Lochner.

Indeed, Ford was never a true pacifist. He had little interest in political theory or the nuance of diplomacy, and he had an incredibly myopic view of the war's origins. Ford had made this perfectly clear to the press in the days leading up to the Peace Ship's departure, when he told *The New York Times* that he believed clandestine munitions manufacturers were driving the conflict for personal gain. Refuting his critics' assertion that he and his party were little more than childish do-gooders, Ford asserted that the Peace Ship was "not a sentimental proposition but a business proposition."[48] These words should have been a red flag for Lochner and

[46] Lochner, 226.
[47] Lochner, 227.
[48] "Ford Defies His Critics," *The New York Times,* December 2, 1915, 2.

Schwimmer. Blinded by their idealism and own ambitions, they ignored Ford's guiding principles. By stressing the importance of business in peacekeeping, Ford diverged from the basic ideology of his cohorts. "I do not like the word 'peace' as a word," he continued, "Peace means nothing … I like the word 'construction.' Construction is what a useful manufacturer does."[49] Ford believed sincerely that because the profits from the arms trade were fleeting, he had to promote an enduring peace in order to protect industrial prosperity.

Ford equated world peace with the ability to conduct business both domestically and abroad in order to maximize productivity. He ascribed to the fundamental tenets of Fredrick Taylor and scientific management. Greater productivity, he assumed, would lead to higher profits, which would lead to better wages, which would lead to a shorter working day and a higher standard of living for the masses. Because war threatened this pattern, it had to be averted. Mass production, Ford assumed rather incorrectly, would free hard-pressed Americans from basic struggles for subsistence, granting them ample time to participate in civic life and thereby eliminate the special interest groups that encouraged war. Ford was a humanitarian who cared deeply about the physical cost of war, but he also considered his business interests at all times. Peace and business were not at all mutually exclusive. To Ford, they were one and the same. The Peace Ship, Ford declared, was meant to force "the capitalists see that peace is practicable—that peace offers new opportunities for production."[50]

When Ford turned his back on the Peace Ship and discontinued all funding, Lochner and many other peace delegates ironically embraced communism. In a diatribe echoing the spirit of Karl Marx, Lochner described his newfound hope in a working class revolution:

> Our eyes were opened. … We returned convinced that, so long as the profit system which continually seeks new markets and which unceasingly finds itself in competition with

[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

> other concession hunters remains, permanent peace cannot be achieved. … We saw that our idealism availed little against a system built upon the exploitation of the many by the few.[51]

To Lochner and many of the other peace delegates, Ford was now one of the capitalist elites working against the greater good. Ford, however, made no secret of his worldview, which historian Barbara Kraft summed up appropriately as "What was good for the business of the Ford Motor Company was good for America, and what was good for America was good for the world."[52] Though Ford ultimately abandoned the Peace Ship, he did not abandon his belief that industry, with the aid of motion pictures, would help secure an enduring peace based on free and open markets.

The Peace Ship experience fueled Ford's growing interest in motion pictures. After the incident, Ford greatly expanded his role in the newsreel industry and the role of motion pictures in the operations of his plants. Thomas Edison, one of the founders of the medium, supported his close friend's newfound interest. Ford tried desperately to convince Edison to partake in the Peace Ship expedition but Edison ultimately refused. He did, however, join the thousands of spectators at New York Harbor to wish Ford farewell. Perhaps more than any other event, this brief exchange symbolized the transition of motion pictures from the hands of independent inventors to those of large-scale system-builders.

As Thomas Hughes and other scholars have made clear, system-builders dominated technological innovation after World War I. Technological systems typically refer to large-scale electrical, communication, transportation, production, and military networks that function as the foundation of modern society. They consist of both physical components—the actual 'nuts-and-

[51] Lochner, 228-229.
[52] Barbara Kraft, *The Peace Ship: Henry Ford's Pacifist Adventure in the First World War* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1978), 85.

bolts' that make the system operate—and social, political, and economic components that shape and are shaped by the system itself. Ford oversaw one of the most visible technological systems on the planet, which partly explained his popularity. The influence of his system extended far beyond the walls of his plants. It marshaled an unprecedented amount of labor and resources between several continents. Ford Motors directly and indirectly employed hundreds of thousands of workers via a supply chain that connected brutal rubber plantations in Africa to assembly lines in Michigan. The chief business of Ford Motors represented far more than automobile production. Its chief business was building an American society dependent and structured upon automobiles. Ford realized that motion pictures could help accomplish this goal.

Though Ford's style of manufacturing made him a household name, few appreciated the role motion pictures played in its success. Ford was without a doubt the first industrialist to incorporate motion pictures into what he called "the System." After careful observation and gradual testing, Ford and his managers found motion pictures increasingly beneficial to the flow of production. Ford treated the application of motion pictures to his system of production the same way he treated any new technology. Within two years after its inception, his motion picture department had twenty-four full-time employees and dominated the fourth floor of the Highland Park Plant. When Carl Gregory, a writer for *Moving Picture World*, visited Ford's motion picture department in December 1917, he was shocked to find a state-of-the-art studio equipped with a fleet of 35mm cameras. Like a well-oiled machine, Gregory noted, Ford's "motion picture laboratory" had been broken down into thirteen interrelated parts: administration, studio, art, film stock, enlarging, developing, processing, title-making, printing, perforating, drying, assembly, and shipping. Likening the department to the assembly line on the factory floor, Gregory stressed

that "nothing is left to chance and the human element is eliminated in the making of Ford moving pictures."[53]

The Peace Ship episode taught Ford a great deal about cinema's potential as a form of mass communication. With the intention, as he put it, "to inform the masses of America about America and to inform the masses of other lands about America," Ford created one of the first popular educational film series.[54] The *Ford Animated Weekly*—later renamed the *Ford Educational Weekly*—were short documentaries that examined American industry, technology, government, and society. Ford thought that his *Weekly*, as it was commonly referenced, could function as an independent news source capable of enlightening and inspiring. After securing a distribution deal with Goldywn Pictures in 1918, the *Weekly* became perhaps the most ubiquitous motion picture series in the world. In fact, its national availability rivaled that of any major print publication. It screened weekly in approximately 4,000 theaters for several million Americans.

The series proved so popular that Ford's motion picture department had them translated into almost a dozen languages and exported to theaters in Europe, South America, and Africa. The United States federal government took note and adopted many *Weekly* films for use in Foreign Service programs. "What the Peace Ship failed to do," one reporter noted, "the *Weekly* may more surely accomplish."[55] Ford equipped the *Weekly* camera crew with a portable studio that allowed them to travel the United States and produce hundreds of films ranging from fifteen to twenty minutes. Though the series covered everything from sporting events to presidential elections, most of them were of the "Making of" variety.

[53] Carl Gregory, "A Model Motion Picture Laboratory," *Moving Picture World*, December 29, 1917, 82.
[54] Metcalfe, 24.
[55] "Fords Rush In," *Photoplay*, June 1919, 65.

By dramatizing the production of everyday items, such as pottery, shoes, cut glass, and of course automobiles, Ford hoped "to acquaint the general public with the technical side of America's industrial world."[56] Ford believed earnestly that Americans possessed a natural technical know-how that required his support. Film journals and magazines celebrated Ford for expanding the motion picture industry and addressing head on, as one reporter noted, "the fact that most Americans have been woefully ignorant of the fundamental technical foundations of our modern industrial civilization."[57] Because his films revealed what he considered "real America," Ford, the world's most celebrated system-builder, came to see his *Weekly* as a legitimate purveyor of global democracy and capitalism.[58] For his films to reach the largest audience, however, Ford knew that he had to think beyond theaters. Consequently, his motion picture department gradually turned its attention to public schools.

The war forced educators to confront motion picture's unprecedented persuasive power on the minds of youth. As a result, dozens of new organizations and journals, like the International Educational Cinemotographic Institute and *Visual Education,* emerged to analyze how motion pictures could best educate students on the realities of war. Henry Ford and his *Weekly* were involved heavily in these discussions. "Henry Ford," proclaimed an advertisement for the *Weekly*, "has felt there should a great, powerful screen educator beyond the reach or influence of propaganda."[59] Because governments both foreign and domestic could not control

[56] Jerome Lachenbruch, "Technique of American Industry Shown on the Screen," *Moving Picture Age,* March 1920, 19.
[57] Lachenbruch, 19.
[58] "$1,000,000 a Year Invested to Maintain the Quality of the Ford Educational Weekly," *Motion Picture News*, February 1, 1919, 654.
[59] "$1,000,000 a Year Invested to Maintain the Quality of the Ford Educational Weekly," *Motion Picture News*, February 1, 1919, 654.

Ford's films, advertisements from immediately after the war insisted that they had "attained an importance greater than they ever had before."[60]

The *Weekly* raised awareness of the possibilities of incorporating motion pictures into school curriculum. Ford's motion picture department worked first with public schools in Detroit to produce a series of history and geography films. The films were popular with the Board of Education of Detroit, which encouraged their adoption into schools throughout the Midwest. By 1920, the *Weekly* had made its way into thousands of public schools and nearly every YMCA in the country. Some overzealous superintendents, like John Cole of the Chicago Board of Education, went so far as to suggest that films like the *Weekly* would soon supplant the need for textbooks.[61] His enthusiasm mirrored the unusual amount of faith many Americans had in corporations. The only ethical controversy surrounding the *Weekly* stemmed not from fears of a private company steering the content of public education but from the possibility of classroom fires. Film stock was highly flammable. In fact, Ford's motion picture department always championed its independence from the state as one of its key strengths and selling points. Ford considered this when he exercised the idea of running for a seat in the United States Senate.

When Ford decided to support the Allied war effort, he had to reevaluate his former adherence to isolationist politics. His anti-war views did not waver, but he did find himself enthusiastically in support of Wilson and the League of Nations. He was certain the United States needed to tighten its grip over world affairs. The Republican resistance to Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations troubled Ford. He was certain that the postwar peace hinged on the establishment of an international body founded on anti-war ideals and spearheaded by the United States. The League of Nations, he figured, would protect American business interests and

[60] Ibid.
[61] "Classroom Cinematography," *Reel and Slide,* September 1919, 21.

champion systems of mass production. Though his *Weekly* only occasionally addressed these politics explicitly, Ford did think it could play a role in projecting American democracy and industry abroad. Wilson took note of Ford's anti-war values and growing influence in educational circles and personally persuaded him to run for office. Ford's home state of Michigan was always hotly contested and Wilson was certain that a Ford victory could help him secure the few Democratic votes needed to push Congress in favor of the League. Even though Ford had no clear affiliations with any political party, Wilson told him, "You are the only man in Michigan who can be elected and help bring about the peace you so desire."[62]

Ford narrowly lost the election by only a few thousand votes. Widespread condemnation of the Peace Ship certainly played a role in securing the Republican victory. Former Michigan Governor Chase Osborn, for example, claimed Ford's "ridiculous 'peace ship' enterprise, which was criminal if done for advertising purposes, and insane if sincere, disqualifies him."[63] Ford's loss came as a surprise to Wilson because only two years earlier Ford had actually won the Republican presidential primary in Michigan without even campaigning. However, the experience had little impact on Ford. He knew that his contributions to peacekeeping would come from shaping American industry and its systems of mass production instead of government.

Edward Filene, an American businessman and activist credited with popularizing credit unions, was an associate of Ford's who articulated better than anyone the idea that mass production could cultivate world peace. Filene did not partake in Ford's Peace Ship but did share his concern over the use of motion pictures in spreading pro-war propaganda. Filene hoped to

[62] Willis Dunbar and George May, *Michigan: A History of the Wolverine States* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 467.
[63] "Osborn Attacks Ford as Candidate," *The New York Times*, June 15, 1918, 6.

eliminate international misunderstanding by strengthening the United States' role in arbitration. Like Ford, Filene believed that an enduring peace would require the assistance of benevolent businessmen. According to Filene, "world peace has now become not only a practical possibility, but the logical outcome of successful business methods."[64] Ford shared this sentiment but was not too successful at explaining it. Filene published several popular books that championed Ford's manufacturing system and called for the full-scale "Fordizing" of American life.[65]

Filene was one of a number of vocal businessmen who believed that the roots of war lay almost entirely in the public's ability to access goods and services. In the machine age, Filene argued, world peace depended little upon how much activists or politicians wanted it, but rather upon how well industrial machinery provided for the material necessities of the masses. Rejecting Marxist interpretations of conflict, Filene claimed that there was no need for a revolution where the working class takes control of the means of production. Instead, the state and the public should encourage talented system-builders, like Ford, to operate their plants at the greatest capacity possible. By mass-producing all material goods, Filene assumed quite incorrectly that traditional classes would become obsolete as prices for goods and services became affordable to all. A Fordized America did not mean a standardized America where every citizen had identical automobiles, homes, clothes, and other commodities. It referred to a society where all industries achieved such high levels of efficiency and productivity that the public could work only a few hours a day yet return home with unprecedented purchasing power. Filene summed up the idea accordingly:

> Mass production, in a word, includes the whole world through serving the whole world. It does not, and it can not, leave anybody out of its benefits. It destroys antagonism on the part of consumers by making prices as low as possible, and on the part of workers by

[64] Edward Filene, *Successful Living in this Machine Age* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1931), 141.
[65] Edward Filene, *The Way Out: A Forecast of Coming Changes in American Business and Industry* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1925), 176.

> making wages as high as possible; and it undermines the whole incentive to war by making world exchange as profitable to everybody as it can possibly be.[66]

This vision of a completely Fordized world represented what Filene and Ford considered the highest stage of capitalism. Filene's ideas reflected the larger pro-business attitudes characteristic of American culture at that time.

Many American businessmen and politicians in the 1920s believed that corporations had a positive influence on world affairs. When President Calvin Coolidge stated plainly "the chief business of the American people is business," he recognized fully that many Americans viewed big business as one of the primary missionaries for their ideals. As an engine for the spread of liberal democracy and capitalism, American business could aid the State Department's desire to secure markets abroad and preserve the postwar peace. Conveniently, Coolidge, like most American policy-makers of the era, figured that international peace and the interests of humanity aligned with the economic interests of the United States. Bestselling author Bruce Barton even went so far as to promote the expansion of American business as a holy endeavor.

Barton championed Jesus as the founder of American business in his influential book *The Man Nobody Knows,* which reframed the Gospels as a model for American corporations. By fixing big business to Christianity, Barton laid bare one of the central features of the era. He sanctified technological system-builders like Henry Ford and promoted industrial centers like Gary, Indiana as the New Jerusalem. "American business," Barton praised, "was the salvation of the world."[67] His lofty ideas were emblematic of the wider appreciation for American industry and technology, which motion pictures had only recently come to signify. Of all the businessmen

[66] Filene, 142.
[67] Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobs-Merrill Company, 1925), 6.

revered for advancing the interests of the United States, none garnered as much attention and enthusiasm as Ford.

Ford recognized that motion pictures could serve his unique brand of mass production and scientific management. The commissioning of dozens of instructional films helped improve his production process. His managers collaborated with the motion picture department to record workers on the factory floor in an earnest attempt to streamline production. Motion pictures were a valuable aid in time studies, allowing managers to locate areas of production prone to unnecessary tasks, worker fatigue, and even sabotage. Moreover, instructional films showed workers precisely what an ideal performance on the factory floor looked like. From welding to painting, cameramen captured every particular, piecemeal task. In fact, many workers, unaware that they had been recorded, were surprised to see themselves during one of Ford's many mandatory employee film screenings. At the plants in Highland Park and Dearborn, managers screened films for approximately three-hundred workers every day. Equipped with fully-functioning theaters, the plants, according to one observer, used films to stress "discipline, order, and system."[68] This was fitting, for the motion picture camera, he suggested, was essentially Fordism in a box.

Though it would be an exaggeration to say that the instructional films functioned as a form of overt surveillance, some observers, including silent film comedian Charlie Chaplin, found the Ford system cold and alienating. In perhaps the most iconic scene in Chaplin's landmark film *Modern Times* (1931), a Henry Ford lookalike emerges frequently on a large screen to bark orders at assembly workers teetering on the brink of insanity. Ford, however,

[68] Carl Gregory, "A Model Motion Picture Laboratory," *Moving Picture World*, December 29, 1917, 82.

insisted that his films were not a means of control and in reality had the best interest of his workers at heart.

The Ford motion picture department produced dozens of safety films to help prevent injury and death on the factory floor. Safety films were an important part of the larger Safety First movement that improved working conditions considerably in the first half of the twentieth century. The Safety First movement was a joint effort between the federal government, labor unions, and large railroad, mining, and manufacturing firms to lower accident rates in the workplace.[69] The deadly Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911 triggered public outcry and raised awareness about the United States' exceptionally dangerous production practices. Pressure from Progressive reformers and the public forced the federal government to enact workers' compensation laws to protect employees from negligence. These laws dramatically increased the costs related to workplace accidents, thereby giving employers an incentive to improve safety. Heeding these developments, Ford recognized that films could be as effective as proper guardrails, signage, vents, exhausters, and air conditioning units at protecting workers from harm. Edward Filene credited the strong safety standards at Ford's plants as one of the major reasons why the United States needed to fully "Fordize."[70]

Safety films tended to operate under the false assumption that workplace accidents were almost always the result of human error. They were an extension of time-honored common law practices which had placed the onus for workplace injuries entirely on workers rather than employers. However, for the first time on a large scale, states started recognizing that even though workers had the freedom to quit their jobs if they felt they were too dangerous, this did

[69] See: Mark Aldrich, *Safety First: Technology, Labor, and Business in the Building of American Work Safety, 1870-1939* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1997).
[70] David Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production: The Development of Manufacturing Technology in the United States, 1800-1932* (Baltimore MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1985).

not inherently absolve employers like Ford of liability. As a result, many safety films demonstrated the need for employees to monitor one another's actions and never veer from standard procedure. The films made occasional "suggestions" on how workers could improve themselves and their home life. Abstaining from alcohol and gambling were often at the forefront. Ford, like most industrialists of his era, was a supporter of prohibition and treated alcohol as a threat to workplace safety and thus his interests. This garnered him nods from many publications, like *Visual Education* and *Moving Picture World*, which often praised safety films for allowing non-English speakers the possibility of seeing precisely how and why accidents occur. "Experience has shown," one reporter noted, "that these pictures are a powerful force in educating the workers, especially of foreign birth … their minds readily grasp the universal language—pictures."[71] Some reporters even went so far as to credit safety films with helping "Americanize" foreign workers.

It was not uncommon for safety films to be screened alongside broader educational films that championed American business and values. The management at Chicago North Shore Railroad Company, for example, loved safety films because they taught the "foreign-born men much-needed lessons in health, sanitation, American history, and American standards of living."[72] Ford similarly championed his company's safety films because they allowed his workers, the majority of whom hailed from Central and Eastern Europe, an opportunity to comprehend the technological systems of the United States. To Hugh Frayne, general organizer of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), safety films were the greatest "Americanizing, civilizing, and humanizing influence in the world." For industrial workers, he argued

[71] George Wallis, "Safety Movies—Their Field, Value, and Appeal," *Visual Education*, April 1923, 108.
[72] "Motion Pictures in Business," *Visual Education*, April 1923, 115. "Films are Used to Make American Citizens at Duluth, Minn.," *Reel and Slide*, May 1919, 18-19.

passionately, "the motion pictures are of the most potent value as they stamp upon the minds of the uneducated, constructive picture lessons and afford them a chance to read with the eye."[73]

Despite the condescending and paternal undertones to safety films, they proved undeniably effective. Management at the Ford Motor Company traced a gradual decrease in accidents following the first year of screening safety films.[74] Though Ford made no secret of his disdain for organized labor, the various trade unions acknowledged the efficacy of his films and helped enforce Ford's dubious reputation as an ally to the working class. Safety films screened every afternoon after the completion of the first shift. Management actually provided workers with tickets the day prior to the film's screening, which usually lasted anywhere between forty-five minutes and an hour. Despite Ford's reputation as something of a stoic curmudgeon, he insisted that his films needed to be at least relatively entertaining. To hold workers' attention, the films had to have plot, characters, action, drama, and even occasional moments of humor. Though titles for his safety films, like *Making Wheels for Automobiles,* appear less than exciting, Ford was adamant that his films were not dry and that his employees enjoyed them genuinely. "I have seen people shed tears," one proponent of Ford-style safety films exclaimed, "over these films time and again."[75] With safety films, Ford took the Safety First campaign to a new level. Inspired by Ford's idea to blend entertainment with safety instruction, field representatives for insurance companies made sure that nearly every major American business had integrated safety films into their training programs by the mid-1920s.

Those companies who shared Ford's safety film template, such as US Steel, DuPont, General Electric, New York Central Railroad, and American Smelting and Refining, brought the

[73] Hugh Frayne, "Public's New Attitude Toward Industry," *Exhibitors Trade Review*, December 30, 1922, 234-235.
[74] "Films Reduce Ford Accidents," *Motography*, May 12, 1917, 991.
[75] George Wallis, "Safety Movies—Their Field, Value, and Appeal," *Visual Education*, April 1923, 108.

cinema into the working life of millions of Americans. "Today," a reporter noted in 1923, "safety movies are penetrating remote corners of the country. … Even the miner at work below the surface of the earth is visited by the safety movie man."[76] Throughout the 1920s, motion pictures spread far beyond traditional theatrical circuits and into coalmines, lumberyards, railroad cars, and factories. Of course, these developments cannot be credited only to Ford. Historians have, though, failed to recognize one way in which he was a pioneer in the Safety First campaign. By demonstrating how films could be integrated into production methods and used as learning tools on a large-scale, Ford played a critical role in making motion pictures a ubiquitous facet of everyday labor.

Ford's reputation as a film producer continued to grow in the 1920s. Lyne Metcalfe, a journalist for popular film journals, championed Ford's motion picture department as the "First Altruistic Movie Enterprise."[77] However, once Ford started to become dangerously outspoken about his anti-Semitic views, key figures in the American film industry lost interest in his work. His anti-Semitism gradually put him at odds with his partners at Goldwyn Pictures, who had for several years agreed to distribute his *Weekly* throughout the national theatrical circuit. Ford's distrust and eventual hatred of what he considered a Jewish capitalist elite is well known today. Adolf Hitler infamously embraced Ford as an American hero and kept a painted mural of him in his office. Between 1920 and 1927, Ford published a series of anti-Semitic articles in his newly purchased *Dearborn Weekly*, which contained a regular report on the affairs of the "Jewish menace." Eventually, Ford had these articles assembled into *The International Jew*, a four-volume compendium dedicated to exposing a fraudulent, yet widely believed, Jewish plot to control the global economy. When the press pressured Ford to address the origins of his anti-

[76] Wallis, 108.
[77] Lyne Metcalfe, "Mass Instruction—The Ford Moving Picture Experiment," *Reel and Slide,* April 1919, 24.

Semitism, he contended that it was his former peace delegates Rosika Schwimmer and Herman Bernstein, who had convinced him of a Jewish plot to undermine world peace:

> On the Peace Ship were two very prominent Jews. We had not been to sea 200 miles before these two Jews began telling me about the power of the Jewish race, how they controlled the world through their control of gold and that the Jew, and no one but the Jew, could stop the war … I was so disgusted that I would have liked to have turned the ship back. … When I got back to the United States I still had in mind what the Jews had told me. I was determined that the situation should be made clear to the people of the United States through publicity.[78]

Schwimmer and Bernstein denied Ford's version of the events as fantasy.[79] Sadly, however, Ford's anti-Semitic values were tragically contagious and helped spread the false conspiracy that a body of international Jews was responsible for World War I and the United States' refusal to join the League of Nations.

In 1924, Goldwyn Pictures merged with Metro Pictures Corporation and Louis B. Mayer Pictures to form Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). The merger troubled Ford. Samuel Goldwyn—the Jewish-American founder of Goldwyn Pictures—ultimately decided to dissolve his partnership with Ford in 1926. Goldwyn cited the increasing cost of distributing the *Weekly* as the deciding factor. It was uncertain at that time how much Ford's anti-Semitism played in the decision but it did occur the same year that Stuart Blackton sold the Vitagraph Company to Warner Bros., cementing the Big Five as the only major film studios in the United States. Because Jewish-Americans had initially founded and owned the Big Five studios, Ford became increasingly hostile to the larger film industry.

Though film historians traditionally refer to the Big Five's dominance of Hollywood between 1926 and 1939 as a "Golden Age," Ford viewed it as an immediate threat to postwar

[78] "Ford Explain Attacks: Caused by Statements Made to Him by Jews on Peace Trip," *The New York Times*, December 5, 1921, 33.
[79] "Pacifist Disavows Influencing Ford," *The New York Times*, June 28, 1928, 18.

peace. His *International Jew* contained several chapters criticizing Jews for "taking control of the powerful projecting force of motion pictures" and lacing them with "an influence that is racially, morally, and idealistically foreign to America."[80] Ford's remarks became central to one of the first hate crime cases in the United States after Aaron Sapiro, celebrated activist and lawyer, sued Ford for inciting violence against American Jews. Sapiro boasted that the Hollywood studios, particularly MGM, "were proud of me because I had brought Henry Ford on his knees before them."[81] After severing ties with Ford, MGM and the other studios transformed the American motion picture industry into a vertically integrated business empire that oversaw all facets of film production, distribution, and exhibition from the top down. Ironically, the operation closely resembled the structure of Ford's motion picture department.

In the late 1920s, Ford's status as a movie mogul waned considerably. It would be an exaggeration to say that Ford's anti-Semitism was the sole reason for the eventual collapse of his motion picture business. However, it did hurt his reputation as the first altruistic moviemaker. Though many Americans agreed with Ford's anti-Semitic attitude toward Hollywood, such attitudes did not resonate with the cosmopolitan film critics and journalists who had once revered him and certainly did not endear him to movie moguls like Louis Mayer and Carl Lamaelle. Because of his comments, *Moving Picture World* sarcastically awarded Ford the "world's championship stupidity prize."[82] *Photoplay* was much harsher, pegging him as "contemptible, archaic, and a menace to civilization."[83] The historical record shows that Ford genuinely believed that a Jewish conspiracy involving the motion picture industry was working to

[80] Henry Ford, *The International Jew* (Dearborn Publishing Company: Dearborn MI, 1920) 188.
[81] Peter Vischer, "Independent Producers Beaten," *Exhibitors Herald and Moving Picture World,* September 8, 1918, 19.
[82] Arthur James, "A Gorgeous Prize to Henry Ford," *Moving Picture World,* March 5, 1921, 21.
[83] James Quirk, "Oh, Henry," *Photoplay Magazine,* June 1921, 44.

undermine the spread of democracy and the interests of the United States. How much he believed his motion picture department could challenge this phantom menace is unknown. Ford's anti-Semitic brand of pacifism reflected one of the many contradictions that plagued discussions over the nature of the postwar peace. However, Ford's influence on spreading enthusiasm for motion pictures proved enduring.

Chapter Three

Ravished Armenia and the Pursuit of International Justice

On the afternoon of April 11, 1919, officials guided Kemal Bey into the heart of Beyazit Square, a historic public space in Constantinople, Turkey. At the close of the fourth century, Constantine the Great had commissioned the building of the square to serve as an intermediary between the surrounding churches and civic centers. It was an ideal spot for meeting, conversing, eating, and walking. Over 1500 years later, conceptually, little had changed: couched between the celebrated Bayezid II Mosque and the Imperial University (now Istanbul University), Beyazit Square's primary function had remained. It is unlikely, however, that Kemal Bey, a former governor of three provinces in the Ottoman Empire, considered any of this as an official lowered a noose around his neck, tightening it appropriately. Somerset Gough-Calthorpe, the British military general of Constantinople, watched confidently as Kemal Bey's standing-platform was removed, making him the latest victim of the square's secondary function, public execution. Kemal Bey, according to Calthorpe, received the only punishment suitable for "a perpetrator of crimes, the nature of which would send a shudder through any civilized Community."[1]

Three days earlier, Lieutenant-General Mustafa Nazim, one of the acting presidents of the Turkish courts-martial, had read the verdict for Kemal Bey's role in the systematic deportation and execution of hundreds of thousands of Armenian citizens in the Ottoman Empire. Heeding the logic of hierarchical accountability and command responsibility, the Turkish courts-martial concluded that Kemal Bey "created, with premeditation, the circumstances in which that tragedy could be perpetrated." According to Nazim, Kemal Bey's actions cultivated "mortal sins and

[1] Gary Jonathan Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 126.

crimes under the precepts of Islam and are contrary to the principles of humanity and civilization."[2] His verdict was quite radical; the concept of "humanity" did not fit easily within preexisting legal discourse, particularly in authoritarian Turkey. Eleven thousand miles away, this surely came as pleasant news to eighteen-year-old Aurora Mardiganian, an Armenian refugee to the United States and survivor of Kemal Bey's "death marches."

While Kemal Bey was hanged, Mardiganian was busy promoting the release of *Ravished Armenia,* a Hollywood silent film based on her brutal experiences at the hands of the Young Turks. *Ravished Armenia*, the first feature film to depict genocide, starred Mardiganian as herself, and promised audiences an "accurate" and "authentic" representation of "the greatest tragedy of the world."[3] Henry Morgenthau, former American Ambassador to Turkey, praised the film for its precision and immaculate production. The film, directed by Oscar Apfel and produced by the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, raised approximately thirty million dollars in aid and boosted international awareness of the genocide. "This is not a charity," one newspaper reported, "It is a chance to give to the relief of suffering humanity. It is a cause that appeals to the heart of every humane man and woman."[4] The film's marketers promoted *Ravished Armenia* as more than entertainment; it was an opportunity to remedy a crime that had apparently extended well beyond the official borders of the Ottoman Empire. The film, like Nazim's verdict, echoed an earlier warning the Triple Entente had made to the Ottoman Empire in 1915.

---

[2] Vartkes Yeghiayan, *The Armenian Genocide and the Trials of the Young Turks* (La Verne, CA: American Armenian International College Press, 1990), 156. Note: The text is not a formal piece of scholarship but rather an English translation of the transcripts for the Turkish courts-martial, originally published in the official periodical Takvimi Vekayi.

[3] Hanford C. Judson, "Auction of Souls," *The Moving Picture World*, May 31, 1919, 1379.

[4] "Ravished Armenia," *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, February 5, 1919, 7.

After learning of the massacre of tens of thousands of Armenians in the province of Van, the Triple Entente made it perfectly clear to the Ottoman Empire that it would not escape the all-encompassing Hand of Justice: "In view of these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the Allied Governments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible for these crimes all members of the Ottoman Government, as well as those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres."[5] Thirty years before the Nuremberg Trials, the notion of "crimes against humanity" had arisen due to the Young Turks' systematic eradication of the Ottoman Empire's Armenian population. It was a landmark moment in the history of international law: Kemal Bey became the first person to hang for breaking the new code of universal morality.

Millions of Armenian sympathizers in the West championed the verdict. "ARMENIANS AVENGED," popular headlines read, challenging contemporary historians' rendering of the Armenian Holocaust as the "forgotten genocide," an odd designation considering the fact that by 1920, it had, in the Western world, become perhaps the most widely discussed humanitarian issue of all time.[6] The Armenian genocide encompassed several waves of mass killings: beginning with the Hamidian massacres of 1894-1896, when the Ottoman Empire sanctioned the killings of between 80,000 and 300,000 Armenians in an effort to reassert control of the Armenian territory after the Russo-Turkish War; and continuing under the veil of World War I, when the ultra-nationalist Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) organized the large-scale deportation and elimination of Armenians from all Ottoman provinces, resulting in the deaths of another one and a half million. Armenians were a convenient scapegoat for Ottoman officials

[5] 106th Congress, 2nd Session, House of Representatives (1915), *Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution*. Available at: The Library of Congress (accessed November 7, 2015).
[6] "ARMENIANS AVENGED KEMAL BEY HANGED," *The Toronto World,* April 14, 1919, 12.

because they had a reputation for pushing for internal reforms and did not conform to popular interpretations of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. Reports on the relentless slaughter of Christian Armenians resonated deeply with the Euro-American public. "No Turkish trickery of any kind," *The New York Times* reported, "will affect the claims of justice." Upholding a belief in universal rights, the article continued: "The conscience of mankind will not be appeased until these three bloodthirsty friends of the Young Turks … are hanged together in Bayazid Square."[7] The *Times* implicated the Three Pashas—Enver, Tallat, and Djemal—as the primary architects of the Armenian genocide, along with dozens of their less influential accomplices, many of whom quietly awaited sentencing at the ongoing military tribunal in Constantinople. Tragically, however, widespread enthusiasm for legal justice was short lived.

Within two years, the Turkish courts-martial, as well as other tribunals designed to punish those responsible for the Armenian genocide, had collapsed. The Three Pashas had fled to Germany, and Turkey descended into civil war with Ataturk's nationalist party at the forefront. During the uproar, British censors had initially banned *Ravished Armenia* from screening in theaters, fearing it might incite Turkish rage or nationalist fervor capable of interfering with the military tribunals. However, Ataturk's supporters did not need any additional fodder: they had already martyred Kemal Bey, promoting him as a national hero "who was hanged by a puppet government merely to please the victors and to satisfy impertinent Armenians."[8] By 1921, the British military presence in Constantinople had waned considerably. Ataturk's nationalists seized the opportunity and took foreign soldiers hostage. After brief negotiations, they successfully blackmailed the British government for a prisoner swap: in exchange for the twenty-nine British in Turkish custody, Britain would release *all* prisoners related to the Turkish war crimes trials.

[7] "Execution of Kemal Bey," *The New York Times,* April 20, 1919.
[8] "The Deportees of Malta and the Armenian Allegations," available at: www.kultur.gov (accessed April 9, 2014).

Reluctantly they accepted, ultimately ending a series of tribunals that, if successful, would have been matched only by the later Nuremberg and Tokyo trials in the establishment of international criminal law. Throughout the entire affair, Kemal Bey, a mid-level administrator, was the only one in the Ottoman Empire's vast bureaucratic machine to receive the death penalty for committing "crimes against humanity." Ultimately, juridical forces failed to bring justice to the approximately two million Armenians who had perished under the oppression of the Young Turks' administration.

The failure of the trials speaks pointedly to the nature of law, which, according to celebrated literary theorist Shoshana Felman, is "a discipline of limits" that attempts "to bring a conscious closure to the trauma of war … to close the case and to enclose it in the past." The language of law, she argues, is designed to "separate ourselves from the atrocities," which helps humans collectively *contain* traumatic events.[9] However, when legal justice fails as it did for the Armenian genocide, critical artistic genres become ever more salient. Art, such as cinema, provides new avenues for achieving justice. Juridical forces attempt to "close" traumatic events with concrete verdicts, unlike artistic forces that strive to keep them "open." "We need art," Felman argues, "the language of infinity—to mourn the losses and to face up to what in traumatic memory is not closed and cannot be closed."[10] Mardiganian, like millions of other Armenians, witnessed and endured the murder of family and friends, expropriation, starvation, torture, rape, and slavery. Legal forces had yet to establish a discourse that could contain the collection of heinous acts that functioned together to destroy in whole the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire. Law distanced the genocide as a traumatic event; film brought it closer.

[9] Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 107.
[10] Felman, 107.

This chapter provides a deep textual and historical reading of *Ravished Armenia*—Hollywood's greatest contribution to the Pax Cinemana—to probe the nature of international justice during the interwar years. Maintaining the postwar peace, the film's producers argued, required belligerent nations to atone for their crimes. The film directly and indirectly championed international law as the means to hold guilty parties accountable. In order to articulate how the film expressed notions of international law and justice, this chapter delves into the actual transcripts of the Turkish courts-martial. Originally published in *Takvimi Vekayi,* an official periodical of the Ottoman Empire, the transcripts of the Turkish courts-martial reveal how prosecutors attempted to hold perpetrators like Kemal Bey to a new universal standard.

By the onset of World War I, many Western states had already adopted, with varying degrees of sincerity, the concept of universal rights in the discourse of official policy-making. The war's unprecedented scale and manner of destruction, however, accelerated tremendously the push of liberal idealists in countries such as the United States, Great Britain, and France to pressure their governments into implementing legislation and institutions dedicated to promoting universal rights for all peoples, regardless of citizenship. This push cemented for many the belief that a distinct universal morality binds all people, regardless of race, class, gender, or religion. The politics of *Ravished Armenia* speaks pointedly to this ideological development. Consequently, this chapter first aims to locate *Ravished Armenia* at the vanguard of a cinematic movement that complemented the growing legal and political agitation for international justice and global peacekeeping. The second part of this chapter, however, is more critical, demonstrating how these idealistic notions operated under the assumption that patriarchy and Euro-American hegemony were the *natural* order for humanity.

President Woodrow Wilson—perhaps the most dominant figure behind the spread of liberal idealism—told Americans in 1917: "The tragic events of the thirty months of vital turmoil through which we have just passed have made us citizens of the world. There can be no turning back."[11] For Wilson, a question remained: what was the best manner to approach the conditions of the new global world? He understood wholly that the nature of industrial technology and total warfare had debunked the once widely believed interpretation of Western history as a tale of progress. Still, Wilson, a relentless optimist, promoted a global ideology that considered all humans inherently intertwined, rational, and striving for a universal "common good." In his influential Fourteen Points, a list of conditions for a postwar peace settlement, Woodrow Wilson had advocated the spread of democracy, open markets, international law, non-isolationist governments, and self-determination.[12] Wilson opportunistically figured that international peace and the interests of humanity were fundamentally fixed to the economic and political interests of the United States. Nevertheless, his Fourteen Points laid the groundwork for the League of Nations, which adopted the "Armenian question" for one of its initial agendas.

For Woodrow Wilson and the millions of other liberal idealists like him, the end of the war represented the world at a vital crossroads: one direction pointed toward the common good accompanied by fixed notions of democracy, capitalism, and cosmopolitanism; and the other direction pointed toward evil accompanied by fixed notions of nationalism, tyranny, and

[11] Woodrow Wilson, "Second Inaugural Address," March 5, 1917. Available at: Millercenter.org (accessed March 18, 2014).

[12] In short, Wilson encouraged all belligerents in World War I to agree to the following: 1) abolish secret treaties and embrace open diplomacy; 2) freedom of the seas; 3) remove customs and economic barriers for free trade; 4) reduce national armaments; 5) readjust colonial territories fairly; 6) remove the German Army from Russia; 7) restore Belgian independence; 8) restore all French territory, including the disputed Alsace-Lorraine; 9) endorse self-determination for Italians; 10) endorse self-determination for Austria-Hungary; 11) endorse self-determination and independence for the Balkan nations; 12) endorse self-determination for Turkey; 13) endorse independence for Poland; and 14) endorse the formation of a League of Nations to ensure independence for all countries. Woodrow Wilson, "President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points," January 8, 1918. Available in full at: Avalon.law.yale.edu (accessed February 14, 2014).

despotism. This popular postwar sensibility universalized human history into two irreconcilable forces. By 1919, many American filmmakers had already adopted this idealist rhetoric and aligned themselves with the cause outlined by Wilson. In fact, the League of Nations ultimately failed to address the genocide and grant self-determination for the Armenians who had lived under Ottoman rule. Though bold and ambitious, Wilson's League of Nations had always struggled to gain practical political and legal traction. Culturally, however, it had a tremendous impact, particularly in the cinema.

Ravished Armenia was part of a spontaneous political initiative that challenged the ontology of film by deconstructing the barrier between artist and spectator, producer and consumer, and public and private. The producers of *Ravished Armenia* did not intend the film to serve as passive entertainment; it was meant to incite action, specifically raise awareness and support for the Armenian Diaspora, which had become embroiled in a hostile and ultimately futile debate with the League of Nations and the Turkish government for reparations and land rights after the genocide. The film's producers, aware of the Armenians' plight, treated the film as an unofficial legal apparatus that contributed to Wilson and the League's original promise to the Armenian community. With its ambition to uplift "humanity" by remedying the Young Turks' crime against Armenia—an event firmly detested but ultimately ignored by the League of Nations and other politico-legal forces—the film was ahead of the curve. Still, *Ravished Armenia* did not exist in a vacuum; instead, it was part of the larger climate of opinion that had underscored cinema with a distinct humanitarian impulse. A textual analysis of the film illuminates this historical reading.

Originally, *Ravished Armenia* consisted of nine reels, granting it a running time of approximately eighty-five minutes. Sadly, however, much of the film has been lost; only twenty

minutes of footage currently remain. Though the film broke many box office records and was widely lauded by critics upon its release, *Ravished Armenia*, like the Armenian genocide itself, gradually faded from public memory. Little care was taken to preserve properly the original nitrate-based reels, and it is unlikely that a complete version of the film will ever surface. Thankfully, a few film historians, particularly Anthony Slide, have taken it upon themselves to salvage and preserve the film's original screenplay and production photos.[13] These items, coupled with the extant footage and surviving press materials, offer the best means to analyze the film as a significant political text.

This chapter explores *Ravished Armenia* in two distinct manners: first, it reconciles the surviving footage with the surviving script, providing for examination the most accurate rendition of the film as it originally screened in theaters; and second, it analyzes the extant footage as a stand-alone piece. The footage is worthy of careful scrutiny because it has grown organically over several decades. In the 1990s, a videotape surfaced that supposedly contained two reels of *Ravished Armenia.* On closer inspection, however, it became apparent that it was not two *consecutive* reels, but rather a radically re-edited version of select scenes. This version, which also contains footage not found in the original, was likely assembled in the 1950s for a short documentary on the Armenian genocide.[14] In 2009, Richard D. Kloian—director of the Armenian Genocide Resource Center of Northern California—restored, reformatted, and slightly re-edited this version with new subtitles, intertitles, and a dramatic score. Though the extant footage is a dramatic reimagining of *Ravished Armenia,* it still provides an idea of what the

[13] See: Anthony Slide, *Ravished Armenia and the Story of Aurora Mardiganian* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 20-22.
[14] The footage not found in the original film most likely stemmed from newsreel footage and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930).

original production must have looked like.[15] As the end result of a multitude of different creative agents forced to negotiate with the genocide, the footage echoes Shoshana Felman's argument that artistic forces refuse to close traumatic events or leave them locked in the past. In the last five years, the footage has made its way online, finding new audiences on YouTube, Vimeo, and Internet Archive, where it continues to muster feverish political discussion and debate on the nature of the killings. On the eve of the one hundredth anniversary of the Armenian genocide, the *Ravished Armenia* extant footage—an exciting piece of filmmaking in its own right—remains more relevant than ever.

As a staged reenactment of Aurora Mardiganian's actual lived experience, *Ravished Armenia* contains all the stylistic hallmarks of a docudrama, a genre that did not truly come into its own until the 1940s. Though the film's producers admittedly took a degree of artistic license in retelling Mardiganian's story, they remained largely convinced that the completed film was a historically accurate rendition without explicit political commentary. "The Truth, and Nothing But the Truth," swore one film advertisement.[16] With a dedication to realism and the camera refusing to draw attention to itself, the film takes on a documentary feel reminiscent of cinéma vérité or "observational cinema," a style of filmmaking that strives for objective truth by situating the camera as an innocuous fly on the wall. This approach heightens the emotional power of the film and amplifies its underlying political intention to incite activism, blurring lines of demarcation between producer and seer.

Operating under the assumption that its images represent "truth," *Ravished Armenia* functions as a virtual trial, with the audience situated as the jury, and the film's director and producers as the judges and prosecution. Unlike in the Turkish courts-martial, which had to

[15] Slide, 20-22.
[16] "COMING TO THE CENTENARY CHURCH," *The Southeast Missourian*, March 13, 1920, 7.

wrestle with presenting purported evidence—mere reflections of the offenses themselves—the audience-jury could actually *see* the Young Turks' "crimes against humanity" as they had occurred, demanding a more personal judgment. The producer-prosecution presented the film as a carrier for witness testimony, one that the American public, according to the film's press release, "MUST see," as if it were a civic duty or responsibility.[17] Of course, producers knew all too well that activism and financial gain were not mutually exclusive. According to the director of a popular theater chain in New York City, "*Ravished Armenia* broke attendance records at every Loew Theater and proved that humanity is the same in a metropolis as in a village."[18] Many Americans agreed that the film granted the ability "to speak, with the intimate knowledge of eye-witness, of the urgent necessity of extending the delivering hand to the suffering Christians of Armenia." The producer-prosecution made a "verdict" that the act of viewing the film was actually helping to "SAVE A LIFE."[19] Legal rhetoric such as this was littered throughout the film's press and reception materials. Though readily willing to give financial assistance, few American moviegoers could enter the theater absolved of intense personal bias.

In 1919, the gaze of the audience-jury was focused deeply through preconceived notions concerning Turks and Armenians. As stated previously, liberal idealists in the interwar years argued feverishly that a universal morality implicated all of humanity. However, their interpretation of "humanity" was comprised of two incompatible halves: the "civilized world," exemplified primarily by the white, Christian, and capitalist United States; and the "uncivilized world," exemplified primarily by the Islamic, autocratic Ottoman Empire. *Ravished Armenia* exploited this duality, portraying Armenians as pure and innocent, and Turks and Kurds as

[17] Original press release, reprinted in: Slide, 13.
[18] "How Granlund Answered Thomas," *The Moving Picture World,* May 31, 1919, 1349.
[19] Original press release, reprinted in: Slide, 14.

"barbaric and fanatical."[20] Though all belligerents in World War I were guilty of sanctioning pointless massacre, most liberal idealists viewed the Ottoman Empire as exceptionally violent. "It is doubtful if there is any other area in the world," one newspaper reported on the Turkish slaughter of Armenians, "where the war is so plainly a case of murder."[21] The Ottoman Turks were on the fringe of Woodrow Wilson's and the League of Nations' understanding of the global village. They epitomized the "evil" Wilson had vowed to combat.

From a legal standpoint, the film's suspicion of Islam is rather ironic. The Turkish courts-martial's conception of universal rights did not emerge despite Islam but because of Islam. Two legal systems technically governed the Ottoman Empire in 1919: the secular Kanun law and the traditional Islamic Sharia law. These systems, however, were not mutually exclusive and occasionally helped grant local non-Muslim communities, like Armenians, more agency and autonomy throughout the empire. During the Turkish courts-martial, the acting President Lieutenant-General Mustafa Nazim repeatedly called upon Islam as the backbone of his conception of universal human rights. This should come as no surprise since the historic spread of Islam was the result of its inclusivity. Because Islam is a universal faith, notions of class, occupation, race, and history are theoretically irrelevant in matters of law.

Nazim made no distinction between international justice and Islamic justice. In his mind they were one in the same. During the indictment of Sait Halim Pasha, Halil Bey, and Ahmed Nesimi Bey, three ministers accused of supporting the Armenian genocide, Nazim insisted that their stature was no excuse because "even Grand Caliphs have respectfully bowed in front of

[20] Anthony Slide's book contains a copy of the original film script by Frederic Chapin. See: *Ravished Armenia*: The Script.
[21] "ARMENIAN BATTLES UNDER HARDSHIPS," *The Day,* August 11, 1915, 9.

Islamic Justice."[22] Nazim even went so far as to declare *Jihad* against the ministers for besmirching the dignity of the Ottomans with massacres and profiteering.[23] Such atrocities, he claimed, were "not only incompatible with Ottoman Laws and the Constitution, but also the dictates of our faith."[24] Unlike the Turkish courts-martial, *Ravished Armenia* ignored the relationship between Islam and new conceptions of human rights in favor of portraying Islam as a foil for the civilized Christian West. The film suggests heavily that human rights and international law were rooted not in Islam, but in Christianity.

The film's poster, modeled directly after Emmanuel Fremiet's famous "Gorilla Carrying off a Woman" sculpture, depicted this tension clearly: a dark-skinned, brutish Turk with an elongated lower-jaw and hunched posture, grips a blood-soaked sword in his left hand, and carries a half-naked female beauty under his right arm, doubtless to rape (Fig. 6). The poster explicitly equated Turks with apes, embellishing the popular Euro-American belief in the Near East as a backwards region filled primarily with inhabitants—excluding the fair-skinned Christian Armenians—fundamentally opposed to the "natural" laws of civilization and humanity. After referring to *Ravished Armenia* and the recent execution of Kemal Bey, one newspaper elaborated: "The Gorilla is at bay, but not yet chained," demonstrating clearly the caricature of Ottoman Turks as animals in need of discipline, and the extent to which the film and the Turkish courts-martial were embroiled in the same critical discourse regarding art and justice.[25]

The portrayal of Ottoman perpetrators in the actual film, however, is surprisingly much subtler than the poster suggests. In a move uncharacteristic for the silent era, few actors take on

[22] See: TRANSCRIPT OF HIS HIGHNESS PATISHAH'S EXTRAORDINARY COURTS-MARTIAL, reprinted in English in Yeghiayan, 25.
[23] Yeghiayan, 24.
[24] Yeghiayan, 22.
[25] Clive Marshall, "The Gorilla at Bay," *The Milwaukee Sentinel,* January 12, 1919, 28.

the mannerisms or physical demeanor of an animal, preserving the producers' dedication to realism and docudrama fundamentals. Still, the depiction of Turks, Kurds, and Chechens in the film echoed the firmly established racial attitudes and hierarchy of the era: Turks are poised, hollow, cunning, and calculating; Kurds are sadistic, hedonistic, emotional, and easily duped; and Chechens are tribal, sparse, and thrifty. Moreover, all Ottoman subjects in the film, with the exception of a few prostitutes and maiden stand-ins, are male. Of course, men did comprise the entire Ottoman administration; however, the decision also underscored the Euro-American conception of Islamic law as inherently and exceptionally misogynistic.

Though the women's suffrage movement was gaining traction in the United States, by 1919 the Ottoman Empire had ironically come to exemplify the popular belief that women required male guardians for protection. Turks, according to one newspaper, acted regularly on their "brute instincts to kill and destroy."[26] To many Americans, including the film's makers, the Ottoman Empire was a less evolved state, where men *instinctively* murder, rape, and punish, behaviors allegedly encouraged under Islam. Many Americans, for example, assumed that women in the Ottoman Empire needed to wear a *niqab*, a traditional veil, in order to avoid accidentally triggering the advances of sexually depraved Turkish men. In one particular scene in *Ravished Armenia,* Mardiganian avoids encroaching sex-traffickers by cleverly donning a *niqab* and slipping into a group of Ottoman women. Although the scene demonstrated Mardiganian's resourcefulness, its primary intention was to provoke audience sympathy by suggesting how the survival of Christian women during the genocide hinged on self-degradation. The *niqab* was a reoccurring symbol of Turkish male oppression throughout the film. Therefore, a civilized nation like the United States was needed not to champion the agency of women, but to show barbaric

[26] "ARMENIAN BATTLES UNDER HARDSHIPS," *The Day,* August 11, 1915, 9.

Turks how to behave like gentleman. The Turkish gorilla in the film's poster carries the personification of Armenia itself: a helpless yet unusually attractive female. The film's producers, the American Committee for Relief in the Near East, reinforced this representation through its publicity campaigns. Print material frequently depicted vulnerable Armenian girls, hugging desperately the feet of flag-waving, sword-wielding Columbia—the popular female characterization of America (Fig. 8).

Illustrations such as this reflected the geo-political status of the United States after World War I. Unlike Europe, the United States had emerged from the war relatively unscathed, preserving Americans' faith in industry, technology, and traditional notions of progress. By 1919, the United States had reached superpower status, and assumed with gusto the unofficial role as the world's premier moral compass. Where the British had failed to implement justice through the Turkish courts-martial, American idealists naively professed that cinema would help reprimand those accountable. Illustrations such as those of the American Committee for Relief in the Near East, however, were rather ironic, considering the fact that the United States federal government refused to intervene militarily in order to prevent the widespread massacre of Armenians, despite ambassador Henry Mogenthau's assessment that "nothing short of actual force" would do.[27] Seemingly, the United States had decided that the only way to help the damsel Armenia was to generate financial aid, an initiative driven by the film.

Americans saw in Armenians, besides femininity, the qualities they had fixed to their own national identity. Americans celebrated Armenians as a fellow "liberty-loving, industrious people" committed to "virtuous" principles and institutions.[28] They had a natural entrepreneurial

[27] Telegram written by Henry Morgenthau to the State Department, July 16, 1915. Available at: http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/ (accessed October 22, 2015).
[28] "Every Crumb Needed in Armenia; How Many Lives Will You Save?" *Spokane Daily Chronicle,* July 7, 1917, 3.

spirit and an alleged knack for exploiting the free market. Stressing the axiomatic features of the Protestant work ethic, news outlets characterized Armenians as "thrifty, industrious and temperate," as people who "do not waste their substance in riotous living."[29] Though references to these attributes would gradually fade throughout the twentieth century as Armenia was pulled increasingly into the sphere of the Soviet Union, Americans in 1919 widely described Armenians as culturally and historically analogous to themselves. "The Armenian people," one periodical professed, "could be assimilated with our people with no more difficulty than that of most of the Latin races of Europe."[30] According to many commentators, Armenians, like Americans of the late eighteenth century, had to endure the oppression of a large, tyrannical empire. Both were beacons of truth in a sea of alleged corruption.

Fortunately, the United States—"Land of the Free"—could accommodate the thousands of Armenian refugees pouring into Ellis Island. The American public cheered them on. Enforcing notions of the American Dream, millions of Americans promised that upward mobility was inevitable if Armenians would continue their habits of hard work and frugality. The final scene in *Ravished Armenia*, according to its screenplay, strengthened this assumption. "THE LAST SURVIVOR OF A MILLION CHRISTIAN GIRLS," reads the final title sequence before fading into the image of Mardiganian, a manifestation of Armenia itself, hopefully "gazing off at the Statue of Liberty."[31] The film ended on an optimistic beat, assuring audiences that the cost of their admission would directly help others like Mardiganian find salvation in the new Christian Promised Land. Moreover, the scene obviously reinforced the nation-building iconography of the United States as the world's melting pot and liberator of the destitute. To the American majority,

[29] "Armenia Oldest Christian Land," *Spokane Daily Chronicle,* April 16, 1921, 5.
[30] "The People of Armenia," *The Deseret News,* June 30, 1900, 3.
[31] See *Ravished Armenia*: The Script, reprinted in Slide.

however, Armenians were not ordinary immigrants; they were members of "the oldest of all Christian countries."[32]

Entrenched in biblical tradition, *Ravished Armenia* contributed to the cultural articulation of both Armenia and America's national mythologies. Allegedly, within the territory of Armenia, the Garden of Eden had flourished; Noah's ark had landed on Mount Ararat; and the first Christian nation had emerged. The United States, echoing its unofficial title as the "City Upon a Hill," embraced a teleological interpretation of its history beginning with Christian Armenia and reaching its apex in the postwar world. In one memorable scene, as described in the *Ravished Armenia* screenplay, Mardiganian and a local priest kneel before a hanging crucifix in the wake of the genocide. As they ask God for guidance, "a heavenly light from the cross illumines their features."[33] The only nod to the supernatural in the entire film, the scene suggests that God divinely ordained Mardiganian's survival and ultimate migration to the United States, solidifying the belief in a familial link between Americans and their "suffering brothers and sisters."[34] This cultural imagining of Armenians and Americans as part of the same grand Christian happening appealed to a people that needed a new home and a state looking to legitimate its new superpower status.

The inclusion of God's will challenged the film's dedication to realism and actually further stripped Mardiganian of individual agency, something the film accomplished unremittingly. Though *Ravished Armenia* depicted a young women's incredible determination to survive against seemingly insurmountable male foes, it was hardly a piece of feminist filmmaking. Within the film, Mardiganian was molested, raped, and sold into slavery, which the

[32] "Armenia Oldest Christian Land," *Spokane Daily Chronicle,* April 16, 1921, 5.
[33] See *Ravished Armenia*: The Script, reprinted in Slide.
[34] Dr. Talmage, "THE CRY OF ARMENIA," *The Clinton Weekly Age,* January 17, 1896, 4.

film both condemned and celebrated. Sexual violence, as the title suggests, was the dominant theme and selling point of "Ravished*"* Armenia. The film's press materials guaranteed images of "young and beautiful" Armenian girls "between the ages of 10 and 20"—Christians nonetheless—bound in ropes and sold into exotic harems.[35] At a price affordable for even the most strapped American, the film stressed that these "Armenian beauties" sold for only "85¢ each" (Fig. 7)[36]

Marketers exploited relentlessly the fact that Armenians were Christians, not only because it made them appear more sympathetic and familiar, but also because it aroused taboo sexual desires. In one of the film's most shocking scenes, a series of young Armenian women are crucified on wooden crosses (Fig. 10). The young women, presented nude with their long hair barely covering their breasts, demonstrate *Ravished Armenia*'s ability to combine effortlessly erotica, religion, and ultra-violence (Fig. 11). Conveniently, the film could easily dodge conservative criticism because its creators masked the intentionally arousing aspects of *Ravished Armenia* under the façade of historical accuracy and celebrated Christianity. When questioned on the film's explicit sexual content, producers relied on the fact that Turks did indeed take specific measures to abduct those Armenians they considered the prettiest, and therefore the most profitable on the market. Without remorse, the Ottoman Empire and Hollywood had both commoditized Aurora Mardignaian.

Despite the film's tendency to strangely fetishize rape and sexual violence, it is important to remember that it still refused to render it as a mere footnote to the larger massacres. In one devastating scene from the *Ravished Armenia* footage, a posse of nine gendarmes physically attacks a group of young Armenian women in the Van province. Some are beaten unconscious

[35] Clive Marshall, "The Gorilla at Bay," *The Milwaukee Sentinel,* January 12, 1919, 28.
[36] *Ravished Armenia* promotional, *Lewiston Evening Journal,* November 8, 1919, 5.

while others violently resist. The gendarmes then drag and carry the young women into makeshift tents where they strip them of their clothes and force them to the ground. The camera's slow shutter speed creates a dizzying effect as the young women's limbs fly frantically across the frame. Suddenly, the chaotic movement comes to an abrupt halt and the women quietly exit the tents one-by-one with their tattered clothes in hand. The juxtaposition is jarring and effective. By depicting rape explicitly and without remorse, the film recognized that it was an integral part of the systematic effort to eradicate the Armenian population in whole. Couched between scenes depicting forced drownings and desert marches, the sequence treats mass rape and sexual violence as genocidal acts in and of themselves. This was significant and echoed the Turkish courts-martial's equally ambivalent assessment of the rape and sexual violence that occurred when the Ottoman state deported its Armenian citizens from their homes.

Tragically, criminal courts have long downplayed or ignored rape and sexual violence. The difficulty of acquiring evidence and victim testimony, particularly in highly patriarchal societies like the Ottoman Empire, has made it a slippery subject for both prosecution and defense in international criminal trials. In fact, mass rape was not accepted as an act of genocide until 1995, when the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda convicted mayor Jean-Paul Akayesu of contributing to the genocide of millions of Tutsi by aiding, abetting, and ordering several dozen instances of rape and sexual assault at his bureau. Unlike in the case of Akayesu, however, the prosecution in the Turkish courts-martial neglected to articulate fully what exactly constituted rape and sexual violence.

The enormity of the Young Turks' crimes against the Armenian community left the Turkish courts-martial with extraordinary legal responsibilities. Furthermore, there was no established precedent for treating rape and sexual violence as acts of genocide or crimes against

humanity. This helps explain the courts' unwillingness to define rape and sexual violence clearly. The transcripts from the trials reveal clearly that the prosecution's primary focus was on holding those accountable for "premediated massacres, looting, destroying villages, burning homes and people, perpetrating violent acts, and other brutal crimes."[37] By and large, instances of overt massacre and looting dominated the proceedings while rape and sexual violence were marginalized in the broad category of "violent acts and other brutal crimes." Though the courts-martial condemned many acts of women being "deflowered and brutalized," the prosecution never fully explored the events themselves.[38]

The courts' unease to broach the subject echoed that of American news outlets, which often masked the ubiquitous sexual violence in Armenia with euphemisms. *The New York Times*, for example, stressed that the Turks had committed "unspeakable acts" against Armenian women. Though the reporters clearly intended their comments to be interpreted as compassionate chivalry, in reality they were useless and perhaps even harmful. During the proceedings of the courts-martial, euphemisms such as this actually deprived victims of the opportunity for justice and closure. Hindsight shows that restitution for rape and sexual violence was impossible since the courts-martial never specifically addressed the coercive circumstances in which those crimes were perpetrated. Though the trials deserved credit for acknowledging rape and sexual violence as genocidal acts, the failure to confront them explicitly contributed to the silence that *Ravished Armenia* exploited.

As a film character, Mardiganian is never a fully formed subject; she is primarily the object and recipient of atrocious acts. Catering to the patriarchal gaze of the American male viewer, the film's screenplay introduces Mardiganian inside an idyllic garden filled with

[37] Yeghiayan, 97.
[38] Yeghiayan, 161.

beautiful plants and produce. Symbolizing Eve before "the fall," Mardiganian is a happy, innocent, virgin teenager with a stable family life and playful disposition. Within the screenplay, gardens repeatedly become what French philosopher Michel Foucault referred to as a "heterotopia," a space of otherness that exists beyond the material life-world.[39] Mardiganian takes refuge in several immaculate gardens before paradise is lost as a result of the always-encroaching Turkish serpents. The screenplay deliberately idealizes pre-genocide Armenia as a region free from sin and corruption, and it also omits several controversial events Mardiganian had described in her memoir, notably her stabbing one of her captors to death with a dagger. In order to protect her image as the quintessential Armenian pinup girl, the screenplay attributes Mardiganian's survival less to her own initiative and know-how, and more to a divine *deus ex machina* and the valiant acts of the fictional male hero, Andranik.

In the silent era it was uncommon for a film to have a strong female protagonist; consequently, the film's writers created Andranik, a character loosely based on the factual Andranik Ozanian, a leader in the Armenian national liberation movement whose exploits had earned him the designation of the "Armenian's Robin Hood, Garibaldi, and Washington, all in one."[40] In the screenplay, Andranik serves as both Mardiganian's love interest and as a surrogate for the male viewer. He is handsome, cunning, courageous, and keen with a sword. Mirroring the audience's parental and possessive gaze, Mardiganian is "happy in the thought that Andranik is watching over her." After the local Pasha attempts to purchase Mardiganian from her father, Andranik holds her and "swears no man shall have Aurora but him."[41] Regardless of his efficacy,

[39] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite,* October 1984, 1-6.
[40] "General Andranik the Armenian Washington," *The Literary Digest,* January 17, 1920, 90-92.
[41] See *Ravished Armenia*: The Script, reprinted in Slide.

he, like the audience, is situated as Mardiganian's guardian angel. He would free her whether though force or financial assistance, from the crimes of the Young Turks.

Along with these condescending creative decisions, Hollywood exploited Mardiganian further, forcing her to accompany screenings of the film throughout the country, despite her pleas for privacy. These publicity stunts established her as a Hollywood starlet, bringing her tremendous anxiety and disillusionment. After public appearances became too demanding, Mardiganian suffered a nervous breakdown and for the first time since leaving Armenia considered suicide. The film's producers then made the decision to hire a fleet of Mardiganian look-alikes to tour with the film in her absence. Though the film successfully raised millions of dollars for Armenian relief, of which Mardiganian received little, it did so at the expense of her physical and mental wellbeing, illustrating clearly, in the words of Armenian director Atom Egoyan, "Hollywood's uneasy marriage of glamour and atrocity."[42]

Unlike most films of the silent era, *Ravished Armenia* provides a unique approach to the representation of trauma, moving beyond a shallow dichotomy between victim and perpetrator. Though the film disparages Turks relentlessly, and galvanizes Armenians with equal enthusiasm, it actually manages to implicate the entire Ottoman *state*, rather than a few exceptionally sinister, archetypal antagonists. *Ravished Armenia* does not contain a central "bad guy," and instead vilifies every bureaucratic apparatus key to mobilizing the Ottoman Empire's resources and personnel to systematically eradicate the Armenian population. This is an important distinction, because according to Zygmunt Bauman and Raul Hilberg—two of the most influential scholars of the Holocaust—genocide is not a deviation from modern civilization, but a normal

[42] Slide, 7.

consequence of it.[43] Genocide, like the Holocaust, has been rendered possible due to the proper functioning of ordinary bureaucratic apparatuses, which comprise the structure of a given society. "The machinery of destruction," Hilberg argues, "*was* the organized community in one of its special roles."[44] The two scholars argue that scholarship should move away from intentionalist understandings of the Holocaust, which focus primarily on key figures such as Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels, and concentrate instead on the structural makeup of the German state. In respect to the Ottoman Empire, *Ravished Armenia* does precisely this, shifting attention away from the Three Pashas—the primary architects of the genocide—and toward what Hilberg dubbed "the destruction process."[45]

Indeed, the engine of genocide rests in a symphony of administrative agencies working consciously or unconsciously towards a common goal: the total extermination of a people or culture. President Wilson, like many idealists, had argued that the Ottoman Empire was exceptional in its commitment to violence. However, Hilberg and Bauman's work debunks Wilson's assumption, demonstrating that *any* state is capable of marshalling a destruction process, which once in motion is steered by its own internal logic. "THE WHEELS OF ADMINISTRATION MOVE SWIFTLY," reads a title in the *Ravished Armenia* screenplay, anticipating the moment when Talaat Bey, the Interior Minister, realizes that the Armenian "affair" has been left to his "discretion."[46] *Ravished Armenia* does not depict a disorderedly Ottoman Empire on the brink of anarchy, instead it implicates the entire fully functioning state, tracing the implementation of the three distinct stages of a genocide: the definition, concentration (and seizure), and annihilation of Armenians in all Ottoman provinces.

---

[43] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 9.
[44] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Teaneck, NJ: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 264.
[45] Hilberg, 263-293.
[46] See *Ravished Armenia*: The Script, reprinted in Slide.

Though the courts-martial occurred before Hilberg coined the phrase, it still recognized the Armenian genocide as a planned effort between various institutions of the state. The transcripts demonstrate without a doubt that the prosecution's strategy was to reveal a conspiracy between the Three Pashas, the Young Turks' Central Committee, and the *Teskilati Masousa* ("Special Organization"). The prosecution decoded a series of cipher-telegrams that proved that members of the Central Committee, a shadowy body of radical nationalists who dominated the Young Turks' party, repeatedly worked with the Special Organization, a military forces unit under the control of Enver Pasha, to deport, execute, and bury millions of Armenian citizens. In one particularly incriminatory telegram, Salihzeki Bey—Governor of Zor province—when asked if he had exterminated 10,000 Armenians as instructed, boasts, "I have pride; what is 10,000? Raise your figure."[47] Moreover, the courts-martial acknowledged how state officials implicated average Ottoman citizens in the destruction process as well. One cipher-telegram with the signature of Mahmud Kamil, an influential Army Commander, discusses the mandate that prohibited any Muslims from sheltering Armenians. According to the telegram, Armenian shelterers were to be killed on the spot and their property burned. If any government official was caught safeguarding Armenians, "he was to be dismissed and tried by a military tribunal."[48] Spreading culpability throughout the state and its citizenship was integral to the "flow" of the destruction process, which *Ravished Armenia* had made visible.

In a stirring twenty-minute montage, the extant *Ravished Armenia* footage downplays Aurora Mardiganian and reveals the destruction process in action. The film begins with a still image of the Three Pashas pointing on a map to what can only be Armenia, illustrating clearly that members of the highest level of Ottoman government had sanctioned the genocide. Dramatic

[47] Yeghiayan, 16.
[48] Yeghiayan, 17.

combat footage along the western front appears, suggesting how Ottoman authorities had masked the Armenian massacres under the turmoil of World War I. The camera's framing and movement then adopts the momentum of the process itself. First, a wide shot presents a seemingly endless row of Armenian soldiers dropping their weapons on the orders of superiors. In January 1915, based on fabricated claims that Armenian soldiers had conspired with Russia, the Ottoman Empire did indeed disarm all Armenians in the Ottoman army. In the film, as the Ottoman army escorts the now unarmed Armenian soldiers to an undisclosed location off screen, a quick match-action cut shows them digging their own graves (Fig. 12).

In subsequent scenes, the camera continues this pattern. Beginning with a wide-shot crowded with people, the scene culminates in a slow-pan that guides the subjects out of frame. These moments grant the viewer a sense of impending doom. Even though Armenia is comprised geographically of dry semi-desert and mountainous steppe, areas seemingly ripe for grand pictorial landscapes, the camera refuses to grant the viewer a sense of space, which might allude mistakenly to a feeling of freedom. The camera instead resists Armenia's vastness in favor of suffocating wide-shots, with shuffling Armenian bodies filling the frame from corner to corner (Fig. 13). Indicating that the genocide was relatively easy to instigate, these congested frames reflect the fact that Turkish officials, due to Sharia law, had already identified Armenians as non-believers with limited rights, keeping them in close-knit communities on the fringes of society.

Rapid-fire cutting, mirroring the frenetic Armenian experience, guides the viewer through the remainder of the destruction process. In approximately twelve minutes the film depicts mass murder, suicide, burning, drowning, and rape; the singling out and execution of religious and community leaders; the plundering of Armenian corpses, homes, and businesses; the congregation of Armenians into deportable caravans; the separating of men, women, and

children; forced marches through isolated areas void of water and food; and slave auctions in Turkish markets. At first glance, the events look like pandemonium, however, on closer inspection, they are anything but. The film provides continuous hints that Turkish officials are the ones encouraging and directing this behavior. Official notices are drawn, plans are discussed, and ordinances are enforced. Even in the film's most violent scenes, particularly the "game of swords," where women are thrown or forced to sit upon a propped blade, actions are conducted under the approving eyes of Turkish authorities, including Beys, Kaymakams, Valis, Mutasarrifs, and gendarmes (Fig. 14). Though the film singles out authority figures, it still, like the courts-martial, never absolves ordinary Turkish citizens from blame.

A genocide requires the mobilization of an entire state, according to Hilberg and Bauman. As a result, it is difficult to identify anyone as a wholly innocent bystander to the entire affair. Those that were silent, indifferent, or blindly following orders despite their better judgement were indeed accomplices to the genocide. With a few notable exceptions, nearly all Turks and Ottoman citizens portrayed in *Ravished Armenia* willingly jump at the opportunity to murder, pillage, and assault Armenians. Though an alarming number of Turks unaffiliated with the government did indeed partake in the events, there were many who refused. Mardiganian discusses several in her memoir. Though the film omitted the concerned Turks who had actually aided her escape, it still demonstrated how the destruction process required willing participants from every echelon of society. Without the luxury of creative license, the courts-martial had to reconcile the fact that many of the perpetrators of the genocide were never involved directly in the killings themselves. Instead, they were low-level administrators who simply followed protocol from their desks. To them, the killings occurred out of sight and out of mind.

The prosecution not did overlook desk killers— "ordinary" bureaucrats—who oversaw the administrative functions needed to carry out the genocide. When questioned on why Mithad Bey, Responsible Secretary of Brusa, did not take any measures to respond to the destroyed villages in his respective province, he insisted that he "had no personal connection with the matter; it simply was not part of my duties."[49] The acting president of the courts-martial did not grant clemency to those who attempted to divert responsibility to another individual or department in the state. Adopting an approach similar to joint-criminal enterprise, the courts-martial punished Mithad Bey and others for "indirect participation."[50] By recognizing the power of individual agency—the capacity for one person to shape his/her life and the lives of those around them—within the impersonal structure of the state, the court challenged the Young Turks' insistence that the Armenian affair was an unprompted reaction to domestic upheaval.

The Republic of Turkey, the Ottoman Empire's successor state, insists to this day that the events in Armenia were the result of a breakdown of law and order, nothing more than chaotic violence spurred by World War I. *Ravished Armenia*, on the contrary, underscored the verdict of the courts-martial, contending that "beyond a doubt that the decision to implement the massacres was reached jointly among the Triumvirate," and then "organized and perpetrated by the leaders of the Ittihad ve Terakki Party (Young Turks)."[51] Acknowledging the systemic root of the Armenian genocide marks the Turkish courts-martial and film's greatest achievement.

When *Ravished Armenia* premiered in 1919, it foreshadowed the humanitarian impulse that would permeate all aspects of filmmaking in the interwar years. The proliferation of organizations for international peace and understanding, like the League of Nations and the

[49] Yeghiayan, 146.
[50] Yeghiayan, 147.
[51] See: TRANSCRIPT OF HIS HIGHNESS PATISHAH'S EXTRAORDINARY COURTS-MARTIAL, reprinted in English in Yeghiayan, 110-113.

Turkish courts-martial, created new opportunities to experiment with international law. This development sent cinema into an ontological crisis, shifting the focus of many filmmakers from passive entertainment to uplifting "humanity." The tragic collapse of the courts-martial, however, demonstrated how the interests of humanity often conflicted with political concerns at both local and national levels. Appealing to the universal, *Ravished Armenia* challenged audiences to confront these allegiances; and as a provocative packaging of the Armenian genocide as an event, the film traced Aurora Mardignaian's movements from the Ottoman Empire to Hollywood, illustrating how the experience of the genocide extended far beyond national borders. *Ravished Armenia* kept the Armenian genocide open to a multitude of interpretative processes. Though the film operated under deeply entrenched gender and racial assumptions, it still managed, unlike the League of Nations, to perpetuate the Armenian genocide as an ongoing experience worthy of careful political scrutiny. With a deep historical and textual reading of *Ravished Armenia*, this chapter is intended to illuminate what film and law both did and did not achieve in the pursuit of international justice.

Chapter Four

Whom the Gods Would Destroy and the Pursuit of the League of Nations

On September 6, 1919, President Woodrow Wilson gave a fiery speech to a crowd of approximately 20,000 at the convention hall in Kansas City, Missouri. "I have come out with a cause," Wilson exclaimed with the fervor of an evangelical pastor, "It is as great as the cause of mankind, and I intend, in office or out, to fight that battle as long as I live."[1] The speech was part of Wilson's intensive campaign to rally support for the League of Nations in cities across the United States. The decision to ratify the United States membership in the League divided the Senate dramatically. To break the deadlock, Wilson knew that he had to muster tremendous support from the public. However, Wilson's health was deteriorating quickly. He was prone to erratic headaches, tremors, and loss of vision. Despite warnings from his physician and close friends to avoid arduous speaking events, Wilson committed himself fully to championing the benefits of the League directly to the American people. Insisting that the League was designed according to uniquely American principles, Wilson remarked, "One of the things that America has had most at heart throughout her existence has been that there should be substituted for the brutal processes of war the friendly processes of consultation and arbitration, and that is done in the covenant of the League of Nations."[2]

The formation of the League was without a doubt the greatest effort to institutionalize an agenda for world peace in the immediate years after the war. President Wilson and the other architects of the League blamed much of the war on the secret coalitions and alliances that European states had built throughout the preceding decade. Wilson figured that an international

[1] Woodrow Wilson, *Addresses of President Wilson* (Washington D.C.: Washington Government Printing Office, 1919), 57.
[2] Ibid, 48.

organization composed of representatives from the great powers would eliminate any clandestine diplomacy and prevent future wars. Politicians and the public mostly approved of the idea in theory. However, the details of the League's covenant and constitution proved controversial. Many Americans, for example, took aim at Article X of the League's covenant, which insisted that the "Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League."[3] The article's vague language implied that member states had agreed to defend one another in the event of an outside attack. The provision outraged many Republican congressmen who feared that it created a contractual obligation that would inevitably pull the United States into another European conflict. Moreover, Republicans were also frustrated that Wilson had largely ignored their consultation when developing parameters for the League. Because Republicans held the majority of seats in the Senate, Wilson knew that in order to garner the votes needed to secure the United States' membership he had to convince senators' constituents that it was essential to the safeguarding of democracy. Fortunately for Wilson's campaign, however, it had considerable backing from the motion picture industry.

In anticipation of such an incident, First National Pictures released the seven-reel epic *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* (1919). Designed to rally support for Wilson's peace crusade, the film promised to "set before the world the benefits of a society of nations."[4] The film was a massive undertaking for the trailblazing director Frank Borzage and represented one of the most ambitious productions ever attempted at that time. Far exceeding typical shooting schedules, the film took nearly eighteen months to complete and required more than 114,000 feet of film. Borzage modified the script several times throughout production to accommodate new

[3] Article X of The Covenant of the League of Nations, available at: Avalon Project (accessed May 3, 2015).
[4] "Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *Exhibitors Herald,* March 22, 1919, 8.

developments in the war and to include the provisions of the Paris Peace Conference. The film employed over twenty principal actors, including silent film stars Jack Mulhall and Pauline Stark, and nearly eight thousand extras. With a budget exceeding $100,000, Borzage called for the construction of sixty-one custom sets. Marketed as "the greatest story since the world began," the film enticed audiences with both a powerful romance and a "vivid account of Wilson's ideas of a League of Nations."[5]

Though the film is now considered lost, it is still possible to explore its content and influence through surviving print materials. Due to the film's unique blend of entertainment and political activism, dozens of peace organizations endorsed it and incorporated it into their outreach activities. It helped popularize Wilson's message and represented the motion picture industry's newfound interest in producing films that propagated peace. In response to the shifting tastes and interests of theatergoers, the motion picture industry began downplaying nationalist rhetoric around 1919 and instead exploited the public's growing interest in pacifism. Examining the production, release, and reception of the film provides a unique window into the divisive politics of the League's formation and the heated debate over the United States' role as the new arbiter for world peace.

…….

An unconventional figure wrote and produced *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, renowned cartoonist Charles Macauley. Prior to entering the film industry, Macauley worked for many major newspapers, including the *New York Herald* and the *New York World*. By 1910, he had developed a reputation as one of the most sought-after illustrators in the world. Macauley was commissioned to provide the illustrations for Arthur Conan Doyle's famous Sherlock Holmes

[5] "Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *The Moving Picture World,* March 22, 1919, 1586-1587.

stories and Robert Louis Stevenson's landmark novella, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Moreover, millions of people everyday saw his playful sketches of political figures like Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Smith. Unlike many cartoonists, however, he usually avoided drawing mean-spirited caricatures of elected officials, garnering him the approval of many political and religious associations. Impressed by his drawings, Woodrow Wilson reached out to Macauley with the hope that he would provide visual imagery for his 1912 presidential campaign. Wilson believed that to rally support in the twentieth century, cartoons and films were needed as much as if not more than the printed word. Macauley was a firm supporter of Wilson's and he agreed wholeheartedly to support his cause. The experience marked the beginning of a dynamic friendship that lasted for over a decade and launched Macualey's career as a filmmaker. Examining his contributions to Wilson's campaigns reveals the creative evolution of *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* and the White House's growing interest in the political fortunes of the film industry.

Macauley first created a series of portraits for Wilson that emphasized his progressive political philosophy. His illustrations depicted Wilson as a dignified statesman who would serve the interests of working-class and middle-class Americans. They addressed his commitment to creating new antitrust laws, reducing tariffs, busting monopolies, and reforming the banking system.[6] They also delicately weighed in on his pledge to create new employment opportunities for African Americans while simultaneously lionizing his Southern heritage. In contrast, Macualey pegged Wilson's opponents, William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt, as mere puppets to a handful of wealthy industrialists. Their focus on regulating monopolies rather than breaking them provided Democrats with the fodder they had needed to distinguish Wilson from

[6] "Woodrow Wilson: Campaigns and Elections: The Campaign and Election of 1912," Miller Center at the University of Virginia, 2017, available at: millercenter.org (accessed June 5, 2017).

these otherwise progressive candidates. When Wilson's campaign manager struck a deal with Universal Pictures to produce and distribute one of the first political advertisements in American history, he hired Macauley to write the screenplay based on the imagery and themes of his cartoons.

Titled *The Old Way and the New* (1912), Macauley's first foray into filmmaking represented a live-action version of his illustrations and foreshadowed the style of *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*. Beginning with a title card stating "The Old Way," the eight-minute film cuts to a shot of the lavish office of a bourgeois capitalist. A servant is seen shuffling nervously around the room before hanging a portrait of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft next to a massive vault. A door opens and an archetypal "Fat Cat" lumbers in wearing a top hat and black suit. The man rubs his protruding stomach, which his trousers can barely contain, before plopping into a desk chair and flipping angrily through a stack of letters. Two of his employees then approach with their heads hanging low and their hats in hand. Clearly apprehensive, the two men can say only a few words to their boss before he leaps up from behind his desk and wags his finger violently in front of their faces. "Raise your wages five per cent," a title card interjects, "You'd ought to be glad you're living!" After ejecting the men from his office, he lights a cigar and reads a letter with gusto, reinforcing his Fat Cat persona. A close-up reveals its contents to the audience: "Gentlemen, we need a million dollars to swing 100,000 votes … Yours for the minimum wage, High Tariff Boss." The man chuckles menacingly as his servant opens the vault and literally shovels mounds of cash into a clearly labeled "Dough Bag." With his cigar in hand, the man saunters over to his portrait of Taft, points at it, and nods in approval.

The film's second act follows one of the ousted employees walking down a city street. He passes an illustrator, played by Macualey himself, completing a satirical portrait of his boss

standing between Taft and Roosevelt. With his arms draped around the two candidates, the boss stares directly at the viewer with a sign branded across his protruding stomach. "Protected Interests," it reads. The man glares at the portrait, shakes his head in disgust, and continues on his way. As he meanders down the sidewalk, he suddenly sees another portrait that stops him dead in his tracks. A slow panning shot reveals a massive mural of Wilson's running mate, Thomas Marshall, followed by a shrieking bald eagle with an American flag clinched in its talons. The man's enthusiasm builds increasingly as he walks besides the mural, revealing it gradually to the audience. A feeling of suspense slowly builds as Woodrow Wilson's face comes into frame. The man stares at Wilson's portrait and pats his chest in admiration. A title card appears on the screen: "The New Way."

In the final sequence, the tone of the film shifts as it breaks from the established scenario and addresses the audience directly. A poster appears in the middle of the frame, stating, "WANTED: 100,000 EARNEST CITZENS TO CONTRIBUTE EACH ONE MODEST DOLLAR TO ELECT A PRESIDENT OF AND FOR THE PEOPLE." Given his newfound confidence in Wilson, the man reaches into his pocket and pulls out one dollar and an envelope. He quickly scribbles down an address and places it in the mailbox. A look of relief grows on his face. The message is clear: wages and working conditions will improve under a Wilson presidency. The film is an obvious, yet effective, take on the class tensions and labor struggles that were typical of the progressive era. Wilson's campaign promise for a "New Way" served as a foil to Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" platform. By breaking monopolies and stripping them of protective tariffs, Wilson figured he could even the playing field and create a more egalitarian private sector. Macauley's film personified these issues in an effort to generate donations for Wilson's campaign. The final image leaves the viewer with an ominous warning: "Your

government is in danger! This Appeal is to You! Send Your dollar Now!" Though Macauley wanted the film to serve as a call to action, he also wanted it to stir laughter and affection. His fondness for humor and drama distinguished his films from his propaganda-producing peers. Today, many historians have credited Macauley's work as integral to Wilson winning the election.

In 1916, Wilson once again returned to the campaign trail and looked to Macauley to help muster support. At this point, Macauley had graduated to directing, and he realized that after Wilson's four years in office, audiences no longer wanted to see Wilson treated as an abstraction or a symbol. They wanted to see Wilson as he truly was. Consequently, Macualey decided to avoid any staged set pieces or obvious pleas for donations and asked Wilson to give him permission to shoot candid footage inside the White House. Though reluctant, Wilson ultimately agreed and granted Macauley and his crew one week of unprecedented access. The result was the groundbreaking documentary *Motion Picture Portrait Studies of President Wilson and His Cabinet* (1916). Because of the cumbersome title, most audiences and newspapers referred to it simply as *The United States Government in Action*.

Macauley's goal was to show theatergoers what he believed Wilson did best: govern. As the writer, director, and producer of the film, Macualey provided a new view into the daily workings of the White House. "I had long felt," Macauley said of the project, "that the people of the United States were entitled to know more intimately the men who run things for them at Washington."[7] Advertisements championed the film as "the only one of its kind ever made in the world" as well as a powerful representation of democracy and freedom of speech.[8] Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, wrote a publicized letter to Macualey

[7] "President and Cabinet in Pictures," *The Moving Picture World,* April 26, 1916, 1376.
[8] Ibid.

praising the "marvelous" film for allowing ordinary Americans the opportunity to "make them feel that they have a personal acquaintance with those who control the national government."[9] The film dovetailed with Gompers' larger mission to bridge the perceived gap between workers and elected officials.[10]

The surviving press coverage for the film shows that many viewers took note of its ability to humanize Wilson. "One feature of the picture which attracted large attention," a reviewer for *The Moving Picture World* wrote, "was the wonderful variety of smiles shown by the President."[11] Macauley wanted to lift the veil of mystery that surrounded the activities of the President and to reveal that beneath the stoic facade was a man genuinely concerned with the interests of the public. "In a full face view," the reviewer continued, "President Wilson smiled in a way which was new to those who have seen thousands of photographs of him … this motion picture smile may become known as 'the Wilson smile.'"[12] Drawing liberally from the conventions of documentary, fiction film, and propaganda, Macauley closed the divide between producer and spectator. As he entertained, he also encouraged active participation in civic life. *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* took these ideas to new heights by creating a theatrical experience that immersed audiences in a fictitious romance and an actual fight for the League of Nations.

Macauley adapted the screenplay for *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* from his 1917 play *Humanity,* which, unlike the screenplay, is still accessible in select libraries. A textual analysis of the play is useful in shedding some much-needed light on this important, yet lost, film. The

---

[9] "Motion Picture Portrait studies President Wilson and His Cabinet—The United States Government in Action, *Motion Picture News,* September 30, 1916, 2069.
[10] Macauley would revisit these ideas in *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, but focused on the operations of the League of Nations instead of the White House.
[11] "President and Cabinet in Pictures," *The Moving Picture World,* April 26, 1916, 1376.
[12] Ibid.

scenario and characters of the four-act play reflected the anxieties and expectations of millions of Americans in 1917, particularly fears over German authoritarianism and its potential to resurface even after the war. Only a League of Nations, the play suggests, could maintain an enduring peace and prevent despots from rearing their heads. Within each act, Macauley wrote a scene located inside the League's council room—"a tremendous hall draped with flags of all the nations of the earth"—in order to brief his readers directly on the theoretical operations of the League.[13]

The play's first act introduces the reader to an alternate reality that closely resembles the state of the world immediately after the war. The great powers have created a League of Nations and a World Court to "exalt the spirit of brotherhood in all the peoples of the world."[14] The reader learns of these developments from the Black Emperor, a character who serves as both the antagonist and as a clear allegory for the German Kaiser. Similar to the opening scene in *The Old Way and the New*, *Humanity* begins inside the Black Emperor's lavish palace. Surrounded by portraits of former kings from around the world, the Black Emperor details his sinister plot to unleash an epidemic disease on the fictitious nation of Belsermania and take control of its rich oil fields. "Though the world thinks I am no longer powerful," the Black Emperor says to himself, "it will yet have cause to cry out in pain, as my hand closes about the throat of humanity."[15] The Emperor's problem, however, is that the provisions of the League of Nations prohibit him from formally conquering the territory under any circumstance. As a result, he manipulates American millionaire William Banfield into purchasing the oil fields under the assumption that he will sell

[13] Charles Macauley, *Humanity: A Drama in Four Acts* (New York City, NY: The Motion Picture Forum, 1917), 7.
[14] Ibid, 6.
[15] Ibid, 3.

them to the Emperor after the epidemic runs its course. Void of integrity, the wealthy Banfield concedes and admits plainly that he has "no other object in the world than to make money."[16]

The scene frames the debate over the League of Nations as a battle between forces of good and evil. Much of the opening dialogue reads like actual speeches from pro-League activists and touches upon their most sensational talking points. For example, the notion of using diseases to murder civilians echoed the paranoia of many peace advocates who had observed World War I's characteristic cache of new weaponry. Moreover, the Black Emperor's lust for oil was a reimagining of European imperial ambitions in Africa and Asia. Macualey clearly intended to reinforce the popular assumption that competition over raw materials and resources was a major catalyst for war. The disloyalty of the money-grubbing Banfield mirrored the concerns of contemporary evangelical groups who contended that greed was a sin spreading rapidly throughout American society. Banfield also embodied the concern of Henry Ford and many progressives who circulated the idea of clandestine elites working with the Kaiser to undermine the United States.

The second act of *Humanity* explores the Black Emperor's grudge against American genius Wayne Hamilton, a handsome inventor who is in love with Banfield's niece, Helen. Hamilton is a prominent political figure because he created a series of weapons that had allowed the United States to defeat the Emperor's forces during the preceding war. Hamilton is the story's protagonist and represents the United States and its knack for technological innovation. Borrowing heavily from real-life events, the story champions how Hamilton turned the tide of the conflict with his ability "to concentrate and hurl the greatest mass of ammunition and supplies ever gathered in the history of the world."[17] Hamilton, though handsome and inventive,

[16] Ibid, 6.
[17] Ibid, 4.

is far from perfect. He is a manifestation of the most common criticism that Europeans had of Americans. He is overly optimistic and painfully naïve. Despite his brilliance, Hamilton is deeply superstitious and prone to magical thinking. The Emperor exploits these attitudes by employing Alma, a beautiful and proud subject of the empire, to convince Hamilton that she can communicate with the dead. Her paranormal "skills" come into play in the third act when Hamilton learns that his sister Mary has traveled to Belsermania to tend to the ill.

While working with their patients, Mary and several doctors discover that the Emperor is behind the epidemic. When they try and inform their superiors, the Emperor has them killed. Alma carries a personal telegraph device that keeps her privy to the true nature of their deaths, but she convinces Hamilton that Mary had contracted the deadly disease from a contagious patient. The Emperor then purchases the Belsermanian territory from the wealthy Banfield and orders his troops to relocate there. Once the League of Nations learns of the Emperor's nefarious activities, it objects and threatens to ostracize him from the international community. The Emperor ignores calls for arbitration and declares war. The World Court consequently outlaws the Emperor and his nation from all affairs and the representatives of the League of Nations gallantly agree to once again "fight the battle of democracy against militarism."[18]

Humanity's third act opens with the war nearing its end. The Emperor and his forces are surrounded in Belsermania as Hamilton organizes the final assault. However, Hamilton is worried because the Emperor is holding Helen hostage behind enemy lines. Banfield, her wealthy uncle, feels guilty for aiding in her capture and asks the Emperor to have her released. Instead, the Emperor confiscates Banfield's wealth and assets and explains how he had manipulated the American millionaire for his own gain. Frustrated, Banfield tells the Emperor

[18] Ibid, 11.

that he will never win the war because his only chance of survival rests on Alma's ability to sabotage Hamilton and his troops. Unbeknownst to the Emperor, Alma is now in love with Hamilton and sympathetic to his cause. After entering the headquarters of the Emperor's forces, she sees that his cronies have enslaved Helen and plan to marry her off to an influential Baron loyal to the Emperor's cause. "This is hardly fair," she says to the Baron, "There is no credit in persecuting the helpless … that is the doctrine of our beautiful militarism."[19] The Baron scoffs at her idealist take on the ideology of the state, which overwhelms her with confusion. She then has an epiphany and refuses to be "the instrument of defeating the democracy of the world."[20] Instead, she decides to mislead the Emperor's generals with false information regarding Hamilton's final assault. Taking the bait, the generals launch a doomed counter-offensive. Once the generals learn of Alama's deceit, the Baron carries out orders to shoot her on the spot. The merciless act impels Banfield to act and to try to wrestle the gun away from the Baron. A scuffle ensues before several soldiers enter the room and kill Banfield. Helen witnesses her uncle's death but survives and is quickly rescued by the heroic Hamilton.

The moral transformation of Banfield and Alma in *Humanity* reflected the Protestant and nationalist values that were ubiquitous throughout American literature at that time. Even though their actions triggered a major cataclysm, Banfield and Alma atoned for their sins by giving their life to secure a League victory. Their fates reflected a distinct evangelical tradition in the United States that preached that anyone could attain salvation so long as he or she adhered to the highest principles in their final hour. Alma's character arc also personified the attitudes that many Americans had about the German people during the war. Because Germans lived under

[19] Ibid, 15.
[20] Ibid.

authoritarian rule, many assumed, they too were the victims of the Kaiser and were certainly not inherently evil.

The play's final act returns to the council room of the League of Nations. The chairman of the League informs the reader that the Emperor has committed suicide and that his former subjects have embraced democracy and appointed representatives to serve in the League. "There will be no more wars of aggression," the chairman asserts proudly, "we will typify the spirit of the world."[21] Helen then comes forward and embraces the flags of all nations. She pulls them enthusiastically to her chest while the officials stand and cheer, "The symbol of our brotherhood—Humanity!"[22] The scene reveals a great deal about Macauley's worldview and the philosophical contradictions surrounding the League's formation. Macauley, like Woodrow Wilson, operated under the belief that liberal democracy was the natural order for all societies. Any authoritarian nation, he reasoned, could transition seamlessly to a democracy since that was the latent desire of the people. The notion stemmed from the false assumption that all people wanted nothing more than American conceptions of popular sovereignty and representative government.

After the publication of *Humanity* in 1917, Macauley traveled to Washington, D.C. and spent four months conducting research for a film adaption of the play. As President Wilson made his ideas for a League of Nations publically known, Macauley worked with fellow screenwriter Nan Blair and gradually incorporated each detail into the screenplay. Instead of repeating the alternate reality of his play, Macualey decided to set the film in the contemporary world and replace several shallow archetypes with real-life figures. Macauley forwent the mysterious "Black Emperor" and made the villain Wilhelm II, the actual German Kaiser and King of

[21] Ibid, 16.
[22] Ibid.

Prussia. He even consulted with Wilson and several members of his administration personally to confirm that he was doing justice to their peacekeeping ideology.[23] He wanted the film to function as a primer on the administrative procedures of the League. They allegedly approved of his screenplay and liked the fact that their campaign had the support of individuals from the film industry. Once completed, advertisements embellished these connections, claiming the film was "backed by America's foremost thinkers" and "Members of the Paris Peace Conference helped make it."[24] The film adaptation of *Humanity* represented the culmination of Macauley's work as an artist and activist.

In *Humanity,* Macauley treated war as the inevitable consequence of the Emperor's hubris. The new film allowed him to explore this theme further. Echoing Wilson's treatment of World War I as "the war to end all wars," Macualey framed the war's exceptional cruelty as the end result of Europe and the United States' repeated failure to learn from the past and recognize the folly of militarism. Adopting a teleological perspective, the film framed the entire duration of world civilization as a mere prelude to the creation of the League. However, to avoid confusion with the popular war propaganda film *The Heart of Humanity* (1918), Macauley decided to change the title from "Humanity" to "Whom the Gods Would Destroy," a famous saying often attributed to Euripides, an ancient Greek playwright.

According to conventional lore, Euripides warned his fellow Greeks of the fall of Prometheus, a mythological titan who had angered the gods by giving the power of fire to humans. When responding to threats that he would be punished for his actions, Prometheus replied, "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." The phrase suggested that

[23] "Broadway to See Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *Moving Picture World*, March 15, 1919, 1516.
[24] "Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *Motion Picture News*, March 1, 1919, 1273. "Today and Tomorrow Only: Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *Harrisburg Telegraph,* November 4, 1919, 16.

displays of bitterness and anger were a sign of foreboding punishment from the gods. Throughout the war, pacifist groups used the phrase incessantly in speeches and publications.[25] It even served as the title for a widely read anti-war essay published by the renowned sociologist Franklin Giddings. By appealing to the discourse of established pacifist groups, the title distinguished the film from the usual studio fare.

Whom the Gods Would Destroy also situated a contemporary tale within the *longue durée* of human history. Beginning on an optimistic note, the film provided audiences with a melodramatic portrayal of the birth of Jesus Christ in the manger. The scene, according to one critic, demonstrated how "Christ brought to a troubled world the philosophy of love, which ever since has been struggling to overcome the human tendency to create strife."[26] Working closely with Macauley, director Frank Borzage showed this tension by cutting abruptly from the manger scene to the violent conquests of Attila the Hun. Audiences found the five-hundred-year jump in the story jarring but also effective. In approximately ten minutes, the film then descended into a chronological montage of the rise and fall of various military leaders, including Mehmed II, Suleiman I, and Napoleon. According to one critic, the violent tenure of these supposed "great" leaders faded into one another in "kaleidoscopic rapidity."[27] The sequence reached a crescendo with the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, bringing the story to the present. The months before the onset of World War I served as the backdrop for the film's initial plot, a romance between a young American inventor and a Belgian burgomaster's daughter. The similarity to Macauley's *Humanity* was clear.

[25] See: Franklin Giddings, "Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *Independent*, August 10, 1914.
[26] "Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *The Glasgow Courier*, November 14, 1919, 8.
[27] "Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *The Moving Picture World*, March 22, 1919, 1586-1587.

Prolific film star Jack Mulhall played the male protagonist Jack Randall, an independent inventor who tinkers with explosives and chemicals. After a series of experiments, Randall develops a new explosive agent that he predicts will change the nature of industry and warfare forever. But, like Hamilton, the protagonist in *Humanity*, Randall is also naïve. Unaware that German operatives are keeping a close eye on his work, Randall continues his experiments under the assumption that he will eventually use his invention to benefit the American public. Before he can bring the powerful device to interested parties in the United States, however, several "representatives" of a large German chemical company approach him with an offer to study full-time at the prestigious University of Berlin. Taken with the idea of pursuing his scientific interests in a foreign land, he agrees enthusiastically to move to Germany and bring his talent and explosive device with him. Though initially impressed with the country, he soon becomes disillusioned with his new life after mingling with the impressionable German student body. Randall, a proud American and supporter of liberal democracy, grows suspicious of the autocratic ideals of his cohorts and fearful of the Kaiser's increasing commitment to militarism. After discovering that his recruiters are also members of the German Secret Service, Randall finally realizes that his studies are part of a dubious program orchestrated by the Kaiser.

"The Menace," one reviewer noted, "schemes to gain possession of this invention and conquer the world."[28] The Kaiser's plan is to conscript gifted inventors from the United States to develop the most powerful weapons for the German military. Though fabricated, the film's scenario mirrored actual developments in the history of technology. World War I transformed technological innovation by bringing together the interests of business, government, and academia. In both Germany and the United States, large firms worked closely with institutes of

[28] "Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *The Glasgow Courier*, November 14, 1919, 8.

higher education to employ formerly independent inventors in lucrative research and development programs. Many of these programs engineered important chemical agents and explosives that were used extensively throughout the war. As the nature of technological innovation changed, popular films clearly took note.

In order to escape the German war machine, Randall abandons his studies at Berlin and flees to Belgium. Before he can become accustomed to a new university, however, the war breaks out and German soldiers march into the country like a colonial force ready to ride herd. Occupied Belgium mirrors the conditions in the fictitious Belsermania from *Humanity*. Randall witnesses a series of atrocities committed against the Belgians and struggles to survive. Amidst the turmoil, he meets Julie Mathieu, played by the widely acclaimed star Pauline Starke. Julie is on the lam after chauvinistic soldiers killed her entire family. Even her father, an influential burgomaster, could not escape the Kaiser's violence. The first two acts of the film did little to break from the typical portrayal of the Kaiser as a sadistic warmonger.

The horrors of the war strengthen the bond between Randall and Mathieu, who quickly fall in love. Randall's passion for Julie stimulates his patriotism and he vows to escort her across the trenches to allied territory. After a series of suspenseful chases, he brings his lover to safety and then enlists in the army. He fights in the war for two years before reuniting with his soul mate.[29] The two agree to marry one another as Woodrow Wilson outlines the parameters for the League of Nations. Word of the League reaches Germany when a piece of paper falls from the sky into the hands of an anonymous soldier. The solider picks up the paper and reads: "Woodrow Wilson offers the German people membership in a League of Nations." Intrigued, the soldier starts attending various peace meetings in secret until the war's belligerents agree to an

[29] "Opinion: Whom the Gods Would Destroy," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography*, June 1919, 809.

armistice. The scene reinforced the assumption that the majority of Germans were good people yearning to be liberated from the Kaiser's rule.

The film's final act incorporated newsreel footage from the Paris Peace Conference to reconcile the fictional love story with current events. Images from the formation of the League screened alongside Randall and Mathieu's wedding to symbolize peace prevailing over war and love prevailing over hate. This sentimental optimism echoed the tone of the opening scene. By positioning the film's love story between the birth of Christ and the League of Nations, the film suggested heavy-handedly that the two events were of equal importance in spreading notions of universal morality. Because of the film's epic scale and relevance to the most pressing issue in foreign affairs, Macauley figured that he had all the requirements needed for a blockbuster. To ensure success, he hired Harry Reichenbach, one of the most successful promoters in the motion picture industry, to aid the film's publicity campaign.

Reichenbach had a reputation for staging elaborate spectacles around films to intrigue the public and to ensure that their titles made newspaper headlines. He considered himself the "father of ballyhoo" and charged companies approximately $1,000 dollars a week for "exploiting, publicizing, attracting attention, and creating sensational manifestations for pictures."[30] He served as a press agent not only for leading performers like Rudolph Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks, but also for President Wilson on one of his diplomatic expeditions to Italy. During the war, Reichenbach worked with the Committee on Public Information to promote Wilson's image as a reliable ally. Reichenbach boasted that he had the "Italians ready to accept him as the greatest living statesman … they would bow down to him before they did to

[30] Glendon Allvine, "The Press Agent who is Paid $1000 a Month," *Photoplay*, August 1923, 51.

the saints."[31] Though the President approved of the work Reichenbach had done for his administration, he did not, however, appreciate all of his entertainment exploits.

For the release of *Tarzan of the Apes* (1918) and its sequel *The Revenge of Tarzan* (1920), Reichenbach hired animal trainers to book rooms at affluent New York hotels under the name T.R. Zann. He then gathered crowds of spectators to watch "Mr. Zann" shepherd live animals, such as chimpanzees and lions, to his room. Reichenbach's hosts were rarely notified in advance of such shenanigans and raised concern over ethics and public safety. Fiascos such as this even forced President Wilson to occasionally condemn Reichenbach's methods. In response to such criticism, Reichenbach once replied, "I spent $8,800 of my own money doing press agent work for President Wilson. … I deserved some return."[32] Despite the controversial relationship between Reichenbach and Wilson, Macauley figured his tenacity was precisely what the film and the League of Nations needed in order to succeed.

Reichenbach used his clout in Washington, D.C. and the motion picture industry to ensure that the major trade journals would cover the release of the film in detail. He needed coverage from trade journals because he thought too many conservative newspapers would ignore the film on account of its pro-League message. Since the fighting had stopped, Reichenbach also predicted that audiences would soon lose interest in rousing war films. "It's not a propaganda picture," he exclaimed adamantly, "it's not a war drama, but a picture that presents in a most dramatic way the foreseen manner in which a world peace was to be brought about."[33] Peace films, he assumed, were not only fashionable, but also profitable. Because the film's connections to the White House were a convenient selling point, Reichenbach organized

[31] Ibid, 117.
[32] "Tumulty Letter in Press Agent Inquiry," *The New York Times,* July 30, 1920.
[33] "Macauley Production Launched," *Motion Picture News*, March 1, 1919, 1333.

advanced screenings for members of the National Press Club. He wanted to advertise the film's "intense moral lesson" to diplomats, correspondents, and government officials.[34] The media buzz in Washington, D.C. also helped legitimate his rigorous letter-writing campaign.

From the Macualey production office, Reichenbach had approximately ten thousand letters mailed per week directly to the homes of individuals affiliated with the peace movement. He worked closely with dozens of pacifist and peace organizations to ensure that participants received personal invitations. By the time of the film's release, Reichenbach and his associates had sent over two million letters. "No film in recent history," Reichenbach argued, "has been promoted to a greater or more far reaching extent."[35] The letters advertised the plan to premier the film simultaneously in at least one hundred major cities around the world, including New York, Paris, London, Rome, and Rio de Janeiro.[36] In each city, Reichenbach communicated with leading activists who sympathized with the film's plea for the League of Nations. The League to Enforce Peace (LEP) was particularly involved in the campaign and endorsed the film routinely in its publications and amongst its four hundred thousand members.

The League to Enforce Peace was one of the most vocal and influential organizations to advocate for the formation of the League of Nations and the World Court. Prominent politicians and businessmen, such as William Howard Taft, Elihu Root, Edward Filene, and Alexander Graham Bell, founded the organization in 1914 as a reaction to the emerging violence in Europe. Reichenbach understood that support from the organization's founders would prove useful in promoting the film. The LEP brought together Democrats and Republicans in a grassroots effort

---

[34] Harry Reichenbach, "The Special Feature's Place, *Motion Picture News,* March 8, 1919, 1519. "Buys Special Feature," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography*, April 5, 1919, 30. "Picture Impresses National Press Club," *Moving Picture World*, May 24, 1919, 1178.

[35] "First National Purchases Special," *Motion Picture News*, March 29, 1919, 1978.

[36] "Wilson's Ideas Form Picture's Basis," *The Moving Picture World,* February 22, 1919, 1051. "Distributing One Hundred Prints," *Motion Picture News,* April 12, 1919, 2313.

to petition for the creation of an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the pursuit of world peace. Such an organization, the LEP leadership assumed, would work with the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague to strengthen the United States' role in international arbitration.[37] The organization stressed the need to formulate international law through an international parliament composed of elected officials from member states. Though the LEP emphasized internationalism, it championed the United States as the world's premier moral compass. "The great issue before us," one member of the LEP asked, "is, therefore, the Americanization of the world or the Europeanization of America."[38] Many LEP leaders embraced Wilson's belief that the end of the war represented the world at a vital crossroads. There were only two paths, Wilson insisted, "Utopia or hell."[39]

The LEP was a relatively conservative organization overall. The leadership by and large embraced time-honored interpretations of manifest destiny and believed that world peace hinged on the spread of American democratic and free market ideals. Though the LEP was critical of the war, it did not align itself with the many anti-war and pacifist groups that had advocated an immediate ceasefire. Many members criticized the pacifist advocacy of Henry Ford's Peace Ship and pined for the swift defeat of Germany and the Central Powers. In fact, many LEP members supported Theodore Roosevelt's Preparedness Movement and Wilson's decision to join the allied war effort. "The League to Enforce Peace," read an official statement in 1914, "is not a stop the war movement. It contemplates a league of nations to be set up after the present war."[40]

[37] William Howard Taft, "The Proposal for a League to Enforce Peace: Affirmative" (1916). Faculty Scholarship Series. Paper 3939. http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss_papers/3939 (accessed June 17, 2017).
[38] "The Declaration of Interdependence," *The Independent,* February 5, 1917, 202.
[39] Hamilton Holt, "When I Spoke for America in Rome," *The Independent*, October 26, 1918, 135.
[40] "Seek to Stir West For Peace League," *New York Times,* November 11, 1916, 8.

Consequently, the LEP's mission matched the plot and message of *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* perfectly.

Like most peace organizations, the LEP leadership recognized the value of using of film in supporting their cause. In 1917, John Freuler—President of the influential conglomerate Mutual Film Corporation—articulated much of the LEP's treatment of film in its weekly bulletin. Freuler's article, "The Motion Picture as an Influence for World Peace," echoed the thesis he had put forth in a handful of other influential publications, including *The World Court* and *Advocate of Peace*.[41] "Provided due liberty is permitted by governments," he argued, "films will bring about a feeling of international fellowship such as has never hitherto been approached."[42] Freuler shared the sentiment of many other advocates of the Pax Cinemana and embraced film as a means of acquainting distant societies with one another: "Wars are really just misunderstandings … the motion picture, which introduces to us and makes us familiar with all the peoples of the world is probably the greatest instrumentality toward sympathetic understanding between nations."[43]

Freuler assumed incorrectly that the conflicts in the Balkans, particularly the ones surrounding Serbian nationalism and the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, stemmed entirely from "a lack of neighborly feeling—an aloofness toward the family next door."[44] Freuler shared the LEP leadership's distaste for glorified depictions of war and welcomed the emergence of peace pictures. "Suppose the crying necessity for peace," Freuler preached, "could be brought to the attention of humanity through world-wide resources of the

[41] John Freuler, "Freuler on the Film as an Institution," *Exhibitors Herald*, April 27, 1917, 21.
[42] John Freuler, "The Motion Picture as an Influence for Peace, *The World Court*, February 1917, 54.
[43] "Brief Peace Notes," *Advocate of Peace,* August 1916, 246.
[44] Freuler, 55.

motion picture industry."[45] The LEP leaders liked this idea but had few connections in the industry and no experience with film production. So, when Reichenbach brought *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* to their attention, they leaped at the opportunity to get involved with a film that championed their mission.[46] The LEP embraced Freuler's guiding principle: "Let me make the world's film—I care not who wages its wars."[47] *Whom the Gods Would Destroy,* the LEP leadership assumed, was a manifestation of this sentiment.

Nearly a week before the film's multi-city premier, Reichenbach organized a private screening in New York City for the executive board of the LEP. In attendance were William Howard Taft, Hamilton Holt, Oscar Straus, and many others.[48] The board approved of the film and appreciated how "the picture shows in a vivid manner the blessing of peace as maintained by a League of Nations."[49] The LEP leadership was also surprised to see that their organization had actually appeared in the film. Newsreel footage from the LEP's convention in Philadelphia was incorporated into the final reel. Audiences allegedly saw William Howard Taft signing the "Declaration of Interdependence" in the historic Independence Hall.[50] The positive reception from the LEP foreshadowed that of the public and the press.

By all measures, *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* was a commercial and critical success. "If you want to see how much out-of-date war films have become," one reviewer wrote in response to the film's peace message, "see this sumptuous production."[51] Its relevance to current events, another reviewer noted, made it "the best box office attraction since *The Heart of*

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] "League to Enforce Peace to See the Macauley Film," *Moving Picture World*, April 12, 1919, 232.
[49] "The League on the Screen," *The League Bulletin*, March 29, 1919, 382.
[50] "The League on the Screen," *The League Bulletin*, March 29, 1919, 382.
[51] "The Shadow Stage," *Photoplay*, September 1919, 118.

Humanity."[52] The reviewer for *Motion Picture World* ensured theatergoers that the film was thankfully "not of the propaganda type, but is an excellent argument for world leagues."[53] Others ignored the underlying call to activism and applauded the film simply because it was "full of action and wonderfully well-staged."[54] Though it was not the highest grossing film of the year, it did come close to matching attendance records at many theaters. In fact, the film was popular enough that it continued to screen in select locations for fifteen months after its initial release date, a rare occurrence in that era.[55] Even though "war pictures were out of fashion," one critic surmised, "there was a dramatic story entirely apart from the war."[56] The film dovetailed with Wilson's campaign for the League of Nations and helped drum up considerable support. Despite these accomplishments, it was not without controversy.

In March 1919, an associate of the German government filed for an injunction with the New York Supreme Court against Macauley and Reichenbach to prevent them from screening or advertising the film any further. The plaintiff acted on behalf of Jeanne Luckemeyer, known in Germany as Countess Von Bernstorff, to seek $100,000 in damages. Luckemeyer was a German-American woman married to Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, the controversial German politician who had served as Ambassador to the United States between 1908 and 1917. According to the plaintiff, the portrayal of the couple in *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* unfairly held "the Countess up to ridicule."[57] The lawsuit addressed a specific title card from the film, which introduced the Countess and her husband as villains: "Bernstorff and his American wife,"

[52] "What the Picture did for Me," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* June 14, 1919, 59.
[53] "Whom the Gods Would Destroy a Timely Subject," *Moving Picture World*, March 22, 1919, 1691.
[54] "What the Picture did for Me," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* March 6, 1920, 94.
[55] Showings of the film even overlapped with those of *Ravished Armenia*. Due to their similar themes, many theaters displayed their advertisements side-by-side.
[56] "Cleaned Up on an Attraction Fifteen Months Released," *The Moving Picture World,* July 24, 1920, 459.
[57] "News of the Film World," *Variety*, March 14, 1919, 44.

it read, "whom he used to spread his campaign of arson, sabotage, and murder."[58] Reichenbach scoffed at the accusations and insisted that the "crimes charged against von Bernstorff were actually committed and that an alien enemy such as the Countess, has no rights in the courts."[59]

The film's depiction of Ambassador Bernstorff was inspired by his tumultuous relationship with President Wilson and his role in many conspiracies to undermine the interests of the White House. Bernstorff helped traffic weapons to Mexico in spite of Wilson's opposition and organized the Phenol Plot of 1915, a covert operation orchestrated by the German government to redirect American supplies of phenol away from companies that developed explosives for the British army and to the German chemical and pharmaceutical company, Bayer. The event probably inspired the film's treatment of German companies as accomplices to the Kaiser's plan to deprive the United States of talented chemists like Randall, the film's protagonist. Ultimately, Justice Daniel Cohalan sided with Reichenbach and rejected the injunction. This was a major victory for the film's cause because Justice Cohalan was one of New York's most vocal opponents to the formation of the League of Nations.[60] As a firm supporter of Irish nationalism, Cohalan publicly condemned Wilson and the Paris Peace Conference for failing to recognize the sovereignty of the fledgling Irish Republic. Few notable politicians, however, shared his concern, emphasizing another one of the many nuances that had surrounded the debate over the League's formation. Because of Cohalan's decision, the film continued to screen undeterred. And yet, controversy ensued again after it was released abroad.

Soon after its premier in the United States, David Howells, a producer for the distribution company First National Pictures, purchased from Macauley the foreign rights to the film. He

[58] "Would Restrain Film," *The Film Daily*, March 18, 1919, 1-2.
[59] Ibid.

planned to distribute it to theaters outside the United States, particularly in Europe. Because the war devastated European film industries, Howells wanted to cash in on the immediate demand for American productions. He released *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* successfully in France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands.[61] However, for unknown reasons, the film was banned in Sweden. This was an unusual development because Sweden was one of the founding members of the League of Nations and few Swedes would have taken issue with the film's pro-League message. The decision to ban the film had most likely come from concerns inside the Swedish film industry. Sweden had remained neutral during the war, which provided enough time and resources for creative talent to construct one of the most lucrative film industries in the world. Though Sweden had a long tradition of avoiding acts of censorship, it was likely that the government intervened to quell concerns over the potential for American films to saturate Swedish markets. The event demonstrated how difficult it was for peacekeeping films to navigate the conflicting interests of business and politics. Even though Sweden joined the League enthusiastically, the Swedish government was unwilling to compromise the economic interests of its domestic entertainment industry. Actions such as such as this were perfect fodder for several American Congressmen, who argued that the League of Nations would create new economic opportunities for European states at the expense of American industries.

Nevertheless, most American representatives, regardless of party affiliation, actually supported the formation of the League. Even Henry Cabot Lodge—the de facto Republican Senate Majority Leader—approved with only a few reservations. "The United States," Lodge argued, "is the world's best hope, but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, you will destroy her powerful good, and endanger her very existence."[62] He shared the

[61] "Howells Gets Gods," *The Film Daily,* May 12, 1919.
[62] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Treaty of Peace with Germany: Speech of Honorary Henry Cabot Lodge," August 12, 1919.

concern of many Republicans, as well as Democrats, that the dubious nature of Article X in the League's covenant would work against the immediate interests of Congress. Moreover, there was concern that the United States would be responsible for a disproportionate amount of the League's finances. Ardent critics, like Republican Senators George Norris and William Borah, who the press dubbed the "Irreconcilables," promoted an image of the League's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland as an overbearing bureaucracy bent on controlling Washington, D.C. To counter these exaggerated claims, the League to Enforce Peace (LEP) organized a series of speaking events, which included screenings of *Whom the Gods Would Destroy,* to convince prominent Republicans that membership in the League was not only cost effective, but also advantageous for American businesses looking to invest in European markets. The LEP also argued that the details of the covenant were minor issues that should not distract from the League's greater potential to eliminate war. When it seemed as if enough Republicans were willing to accept the covenant so long as Article X had a caveat acknowledging that Congressional approval was needed before member states could declare war, the LEP leadership pleaded with Wilson to concede.

Wilson, however, was stubborn and adamantly refused to negotiate the provisions of membership. He wanted to commit the United States fully to the League's covenant as it had been drafted at Versailles in order to establish its newfound status as "the savior of the world."[63] Lodge agreed that the war had demonstrated the need for the United States to take on a greater role in world affairs. However, he contended that the global nature of the League would undermine the Monroe Doctrine and shift the focus of American foreign policy too far away from the western hemisphere. The debate intensified as *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* made its

[63] Woodrow Wilson, *Senate Documents: Addresses of President Wilson*, vol. 11, no. 130, 1919, 206.

initial theatrical run. During these months, reporters and politicians started increasingly to discuss cinema as an integral component to the formation and success of the League.[64] "You may be sure," Wilson remarked, "I shall value the support of the theaters and the motion pictures for the League of Nations as a very potent help."[65]

Wilson's fondness for the film industry generated the attention of studio executives at Paramount Pictures, Metro Pictures, and Fox Film. Movie moguls were favorable to Wilson's politics and hoped that the League would create new opportunities to produce and distribute films throughout Europe.[66] When they assumed that the United States' membership in the League was imminent, they began delicately to incorporate pro-League messages into some of their advertising campaigns. Many of these were nearly identical to those of *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*. Paramount Pictures, for example, re-released and rebranded the war propaganda film *Hearts of the World* (1918) as "a vivid reason for the League of Nations."[67] By aligning themselves with Wilson and the League, they wanted to distinguish themselves from their competitors and show their customers that they were always on the "right side" of history. Another advertisement for Paramount Pictures made this explicitly clear. "Words won't make a League of Nations," it stated confidently, "but understanding will." After suggesting that the public had bestowed the company with the authority to speak for nation's best interests, the advertisement continued, "The motion picture accepts the responsibility … to be the chosen instrument by which harmony is brought to all the races of the earth." When the name Paramount

[64] See: Digest of Pictures of the Week," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* March 22, 1919, 32. Martin J. Quigley, "Editorial Comment of the Week," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* April 19, 1919, 17. "Film Leader to Aid League of Nations," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* April 19, 1919, 20.
[65] "Scarcity of Studios Indicates Big Year Ahead for Industry," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* March 29, 1919 21.
[66] "Rowland Returns with Glowing Report of Opportunity Abroad," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* July 1919, 50.
[67] "D.W. Griffith's Hearts if the World," *The Film Daily*, August 10, 1919, 20.

is seen, the advertisement assured, "you are in league with the greatest harmonizing force humanity knows."[68] It would be easy but wrong to dismiss this lofty rhetoric as little more than empty grandstanding. Many executives at Paramount did genuinely believe in Wilson's crusade and assumed that films would indeed help bring about a safer, better world. A reporter for *The Film Daily* described the sentiment at Paramount accurately:

> The success of the League of Nations will depend in a large measure upon the abolishment of narrow creeds and prejudices, and the motion picture camera is expected to be the gun which will hold sway over the hundreds of millions who will be guided by the League of Nations.[69]

If the United States was at the center of the League's operations, it was easy to imagine a handful of American studios wielding the "gun" of the world's film business. They were after all far larger and more profitable than those in Europe. "Naturally," one reporter quipped condescendingly, "America, the master hand of the motion picture, is called upon to lead in this [League of Nations] work."[70] To ensure that leaders from within the film industry recognized the humanitarian and financial possibilities that the United States' membership would bring, Woodrow Wilson commissioned William Fox, the President of Fox Film, to travel to Europe as an affiliate of the League and gauge the possibility of building international production facilities. One of the goals was to create "after-the-war dramas" that could "weld together the bonds of unity that President Wilson's League of Nations is destined to promote."[71] Just a few weeks after these projects began, though, Wilson suffered a series of devastating strokes that forced him to retreat from the public eye and discontinue his activism for the League. He cancelled his remaining speaking events, including a scheduled meeting with Aurora Mardiganian to promote

[68] "Words won't make a League of Nations—but understanding will," *The Saturday Evening Post,* May 3, 1919.
[69] "Foreign Plans," *The Film Daily,* July 1, 1919, 2.
[70] "Editorial Comment of the Week," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* April 19, 1919, 17.
[71] "Fox to Film Pictures in France and Belgium," *Exhibitors Herald and Motography,* May 3, 1919, 29.

the film *Ravished Armenia.*[72] While confined to the White House, Wilson continued to receive film-related inquiries. Unaware of the severity of his condition, the renowned British publicist and film producer Charles Higham reached out to Wilson and offered to finance a League propaganda film that he could outline as he saw fit.[73] However, as opposition to the League mounted steadily, such film activities were put on hold.

In March 1920, nearly one year after the release of *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, the Senate voted on the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and the League's covenant. The preceding months were heated and one reporter even joked that the source of all this Washington bickering must have been "a clause in the League of Nations that will make further theatrical wars impossible."[74] Though the comment was made in jest, it reflected how embedded film had become within discussions over the fate of the League. After lengthy deliberation, the final tally was forty-nine votes for ratification and thirty-five opposed. All in all, Wilson was seven votes short of receiving the two-thirds needed for ratification. It was a major blow but the fight was not yet over. If the United States had any chance of clinching its membership, Democratic presidential candidate James Cox, a strong supporter of Wilson's foreign and domestic policies, needed to defeat the Republican candidate Warren G. Harding in the upcoming presidential election.

Harding was not an overtly charismatic or forward-thinking man but he did have a number of valuable allies in the Republican establishment. Henry Cabot Lodge, who had a personal dislike for Wilson, coached Harding and helped him craft a platform based disproportionately on anti-League sentiment. Moreover, he had the support of the media-savvy

[72] "Cincinnati Makes Aurora Mardiganian's Visit an Event," *Motion Picture News,* August 30, 1919, 1810.
[73] "English Producers Agree to Stay Out Of Exhibitor Field," *Exhibitors Herald,* June 26, 1920, 44.
[74] "Striking Humor," *The New York Clipper*, September 10, 1919, 13.

Will Hays. Before becoming the head of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), Hays served as Chairman of the Republican National Committee. Despite pressure to run for office himself, he had allied with Lodge and agreed to manage Harding's campaign. Like Wilson, Hays also understood the persuasive potential of motion pictures.[75] He had studied Wilson's successful campaigns in 1912 and 1916 and adopted many of his strategies. With Wilson unable to secure a third term nomination at the Democratic National Convention, Hays knew that he could use film to help sway votes away from the capable and admirable Cox. By pushing Harding's image and message into thousands of movie theaters across the country, Hays created a powerful campaign based on a promise to "return to normalcy." Of course, normalcy did not include a spot for the United States on the League's roster. To counter the deluge of pro-Harding newsreels and media coverage, the independent studio Harry Levey Productions released *Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge* (1920), a manipulative and unapologetic work of propaganda for the Democratic Party.[76]

Whom the Gods Would Destroy helped create a market for films that promoted the League of Nations and internationalist ideals. Following this trend, *Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge* boasted that it was an explicit and desperate plea for the United States to join the League. Based on Margaret Prescott Montague's best-selling novel of the same name, the film promised audiences that it would "voice the feelings of millions" and help "bring a new fellowship into the world."[77] Many Americans were already familiar with the story since a serial version was widely distributed in a variety of major newspapers. Woodrow Wilson's friend and advisor Bernard Baruch, a stockbroker and former chairman of the War Industrial Board, personally paid for the

[75] "St. Louis Notes," *The Film Daily*, October 22, 1920, 3.
[76] "Baruch to Spend $49,000," *The New York Times,* October 20, 1920, 4.
[77] "Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge," *The Moving Picture World,* October 2, 1920, 565. Robert McElravy, "Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge," *The Moving Picture World*, October 9, 1919, 834.

story's mass publication. In addition, Baruch donated $49,000 to help fund the film version after speaking with George White, the director of the Democratic National Committee, and several members of Cox's campaign. News of their collaboration infuriated Republican Congressman Frederick Britten and Senator William Kenyon, who led an investigation into the matter to see if White and the Democratic Party had violated any corruption charges.[78] Will Hays and the Harding campaign reveled in the negative press as rumors began to spread that Baruch and White had received massive payouts from undisclosed British interests.[79] The charges were eventually dropped and Baruch insisted that he had acted entirely as a private citizen and a "friend of the League of Nations."[80] The incident brought a degree of controversy to the release of the film, especially because it loosely entangled Woodrow Wilson. Wilson had claimed earlier that Montague's story was the finest work to come out of World War I and "breathes of a patriotism so pure and wholesome as to make all the other things of life seem of little consequence."[81] Of course, Wilson's brief stint in literary criticism had little to do with recreation and leisure. He knew that he needed all the support he could muster in order to sway public opinion in favor of the League. If he had to tug at Americans' heartstrings with sentimental propaganda, so be it.

Unlike *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, *Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge* did not actually detail any of the operations or activities of the League. Instead, it was a dramatic reimagining of the sentiment in Wilson's famous plea to the Senate in 1919, where he argued that the League

[78] "No Evidence of Cox Charges," *The Brattleboro Daily Reformer,* September 1, 1920, 1-3.
"White Has No Evidence to Sustain Cox," *Evening times-Republican,* September 1, 1920, 1.
[79] "Deny British Financed "Uncle Sam" Story," *The New York Times*, September 1, 1920, 3. "Hays Shows Costly Plans of Democrats to Elect Cox," *New York Tribune*, September 1, 1920, 1.
[80] "Harrison Links Baruch with League Propaganda," *New York Tribune,* September 2, 1920, 3.
[81] "Uncle Same of Freedom Ridge," *The Film Daily,* December 26, 1920, 86. "Levey Forms Company to Make Dramatic Productions," *The Moving Picture World,* September 11, 1920, 195.

had come into existence with the hand of God. "Dare we reject it," Wilson asked, "and break the heart of the world?"[82] The film visualized this notion by depicting the final years of an old man who lives in a small, rural village with his son. When the war breaks out, the son proudly responds to the call of duty and enlists in the armed forces. After months of combat the son is tragically killed in action. When news of his death returns home, the old man, now referred to as Uncle Sam due to his activism at Red Cross and Liberty Loan functions, is overwhelmed with grief. However, what keeps him motivated is the proposal of the League, which he is certain will bring a permanent end to war. As the senators bicker over whether or not the United States should join the organization, Uncle Sam writes a letter to Washington detailing his plan to commit suicide if the League is vetoed. When the Senate does denounce the League, his heart breaks. To atone for this failure, he wraps himself in an American flag and shoots himself. News of his death captivates members of the public, who eventually force their representatives to secure the United States' membership.

Fittingly, the first person to see the completed film was Wilson. A special screening was arranged at the White House nine days before its premiere at the lavish Selwyn Theater in New York City.[83] At that point, Wilson's health had deteriorated significantly, leaving him bedridden. Edith Bolling Wilson, his wife, had taken over his executive duties and was serving as the unofficial President, the first women in American history to assume such responsibilities. Wilson was unable to respond to the film or offer any real feedback. In a unique example of life

[82] *Address of the President of the United States to the Senate, July 10, 1919* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919). Reprinted as "An Address to the Senate (July 10, 1919)," in Arthur S. Link, ed. et al., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 61, June 19-July25, 1919* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 426–436.
[83] "Wilson Sees Levey Picture," *The Moving Picture World*, October 2, 1920, 676.

imitating art, Wilson, like the character Uncle Sam, had scarified his well-being for the formation of the League.

The film's premiere served as an unofficial rally for James Cox and the Democratic cause. Notable progressives and LEP executives, including William McAdoo, George Creel, and Oscar Straus, gave speeches before the film and helped bolster its marketing campaign. In Washington, D.C., additional screenings were organized to coincide with the recently proposed League of Nations Day and Veterans Appeal Day.[84] The film's producers wanted to garner endorsements from servicemen and World War I veterans. As a result, they reached out to various veteran associations and invited their members to special screenings. Though the film fared fairly well at the box office and helped keep the benefits of the League at the forefront of the upcoming presidential election, critics found the film far more polarizing than *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*. Many praised the film as a powerful melodrama while others found it insufferable for anyone who did not wholly agree with its politics.[85] Unlike *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, the film did not cross party lines and few critics denied that it represented anything more than a desperate and last-minute attempt to save the League.

One month after the film's release, millions of Americans cast their ballots for the presidency. Even with the additional support Cox had received from inside the film industry, Harding won in a landslide with 404 electoral votes and sixty percent of the popular vote. *Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge* proved of little significance against Will Hays' greater, anti-League media blitz. On the surface, Hays seemed an unlikely candidate to help abolish any chance for the United States to follow suit with its allies. Like most Republicans, he actually believed in the

[84] "Patriotic Picture to Play Part in Appeal for Ideals," *Moving Picture World,* October 30, 1920, 1291.
[85] "Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge," *Exhibitors Herald*, October 16, 1920, 86. Robert McElravy, "Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge," *The Moving Picture World*, October 9, 1919, 834. "Propaganda Picture Doubtful as to Entertainment," *Motion Picture News,* October 9, 1920, 2887.

central idea of the League and predominantly took offense at Wilson's guiding belief that "only the Democratic party was the sole protagonist of the peace."[86] The refusal to join, according to Hays, stemmed not from a conflict of ideas, but of temperaments.[87] Hays argued that personal animosity between Wilson and a handful of Republican senators, particularly Henry Cabot Lodge, secured the opposition vote on ratification. Hays believed that both Wilson and Lodge were too arrogant, stubborn, and averse to cooperation, despite the fact that they both shared the same lofty worldview. "They were filled with high moralities," Hays exclaimed, "and the sense that the role of the United States was to be that of a *deus ex machina*, arbitrating the fate of the world from some Olympian height."[88] In the end, Hays figured it was Wilson's own hubris and bitterness that prevented the United States from joining the organization that had won him a Nobel Peace Prize. As Euripides had warned, "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad."

After Harding won the presidency, reports on the League of Nations gradually faded from media headlines. New releases replaced *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* and *Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge* and these films drifted quietly into obscurity. In certain respects, *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* left an enduring and visible footprint on the history of the Pax Cinemana. It temporarily made the League of Nations a fashionable topic for the film industry but failed to actually secure the United States' membership. Director Frank Borzage, however, returned to its pacifist and idealist themes in two more successful anti-war films, *A Farewell to Arms* (1932) and *Three Comrades* (1938).[89] As with *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, prominent pacifist and

[86] Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 212.
[87] Ibid, 187.
[88] Ibid, 223.
[89] The stories of both films are set during World War I and are sympathetic to all sides of the conflict. The characters are disillusioned by the cruel nature of total warfare and struggle to acclimate to domestic life. Adapted from the Ernest Hemingway novel of the same name, *A Farewell to Arms* shares many of the thematic and plot

anti-war groups in the 1930s, including the Women's Peace Party, incorporated the films into their outreach activities as a reaction to the rise of German aggression. Together, Borzage's trilogy of anti-war films demonstrated how the interests of business and activism could overlap successfully. In addition, *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* had an exceptional impact on two prominent members of the League to Enforce Peace: Abbott Lowell, President of Harvard University, and William Short, Secretary of the New York Peace Society. Drawing from their experience promoting the film, the two went on to develop the Motion Picture Research Council, a private think tank dedicated to analyzing the social value of films and their potential as an aid to international peace.[90] However, by neglecting to preserve any complete prints, the studio and distributors ensured the film would be relegated to the dustbin of history. Like the vast majority of films produced during the silent era, it will most likely never be seen again, making it impossible for scholars to fully understand its important—albeit mixed—legacy.

---

devices that were evident in *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*. An American man falls in love with an English nurse in Italy but the war quickly tears them apart. Against all odds, the couple reunites as Italy and Austria-Hungary simultaneously agree to an armistice. Borzage stripped the story of Hemingway's trademark cynicism and created a film depicting the power of love triumphing over the power of war. With *Three Comrades* (1938), an adaption of Erich Remarque's novel of the same name, Borzage continued to humanize portrayals of German soldiers as he had done in *Whom the Gods Would Destroy.* Unlike most American films at that time, *Three Comrades* depicts German soldiers as complex and moral individuals who were consumed by the Kaiser's overzealous ambitions. The story follows three veterans and close friends who return from the war and find work in an auto-repair shop in an economically devastated city. Their experience from the war leaves them feeling aimless and lost. Eventually, one of the men meets a beautiful young woman who teaches him that life is fleeting but also meaningful.

[90] "William H. Short," *Motion Picture Herald,* January 19, 1935, 52.

Chapter Five

The League of Nations and the Pursuit of American Cinema

Without the benefit of the United States as a member, the League of Nations forged on disappointed, but undeterred. By the mid-1920s, the League had established itself as a vast bureaucracy comprised of dozens of landmark international organizations. The three principal bodies included the Council, the Secretariat, and the General Assembly. Managed primarily by the League's four permanent members—the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Japan—the Council was responsible for handling political concerns and disputes between states. During three of four annual sessions, Council participants mediated discussions about controversial issues such as borders and treaties. The Secretariat managed the administrative and financial affairs of the League and published various journals detailing League proceedings. The General Assembly consisted of one to three representatives from each member state and held meetings every September in Geneva, Switzerland. Its purpose was to serve as a discursive space for developing plans and organizations to strengthen international cooperation and understanding. Of the League's three principal bodies, it was in many respects the most dynamic and successful as a result of its vast network of connections. The General Assembly worked closely with semi-autonomous bodies like the Permanent Court of International Justice and the International Labour Organization as well as dozens of smaller auxiliary bodies. It was within these auxiliary bodies that officials found room to explore the possibility of using films to advance the interests and activities of the League.

The International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) became the first appendage of the League to address formally the need for a long-term plan dedicated entirely to the study of film and world peace. The ICIC was an influential organization responsible for

encouraging collaboration and exchange between artists, academics, scientists, and intellectuals from around the world. Notable members included renowned physicists Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, and Robert Millikan. The ICIC operated out of the magnificent Palais-Royal in Paris and laid an institutional framework for today's United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). French philosopher Henri Bergson served as the ICIC's first director and had a keen interest in cinema. Bergson had already pondered the potential of film as an educational tool in several of his publications. As other League organizations worked to undermine clandestine diplomacy, Bergson and the ICIC made advances in making education more open and egalitarian. International education, Bergson argued, was critical to preventing future conflicts.

In the immediate years after the war, the ICIC stressed repeatedly the need to improve opportunities for international education between all nations and peoples. International education did not simply refer to student exchanges but rather to the broad diffusion of knowledge across borders. Proponents argued that knowledge was universal and primarily apolitical. Adhering to one of the central ideas of the Enlightenment, they assumed that a particular nation or group could not own or control knowledge, and that all individuals had a natural right to broaden their perspectives and learn from others. Consequently, they argued, the member states of the League had an obligation to share important advances in all fields and academic disciplines. Theoretically, the communal commitment to the arts, humanities, mathematics, and sciences would better prepare individuals for the realities of the new global world and familiarize the public with the current customs and affairs of neighboring societies. Because of the increased integration of the world after World War I, the ICIC asserted that the public required greater opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes needed to thrive in cross-cultural environments.

Cinema was at the forefront of this discussion and the ICIC was receptive to any proposals for incorporating it into the formal operations of the League.

This chapter details the League's relationship with cinema by focusing on two major, yet largely forgotten events that began under the auspices of the ICIC: the creation of the International Film Congress and the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IECI). Organizers intended the International Film Congress to serve as an annual forum for leaders within the world's film industries to study and promote the educational benefits of film. Despite repeated efforts to garner support from the United States, prominent figures in the American film industry denounced the development. This discussion laid the groundwork for the ICIC to establish a separate body dedicated entirely to cinematic pursuits. This organization was the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IECI). Oddly enough, it was fascist Italy, with assistance from many influential American film producers, that agreed to fund and base the organization—a testament to the reach and popularity of film's idealist implications during the 1920s. The central goal of the IECI was to help "the screen, appealing to the countless millions of all races and all countries, be able to exercise its full power as an ambassador of a better international understanding and universal peace."[1] The IECI's official journal was littered with lofty commentary such as this, proclaiming film's ability to cultivate "mutual cooperation among all the peoples."[2] "By means of the educational film," the IECI boasted, "[we can] ensure progressively the Prosperity and the wellbeing of Humanity."[3]

Though the ICIC framed the International Film Congress and the IECI as purely educational and humanitarian endeavors, their activities were still subject to the harsh realities of

[1] George R. Canty, "International Film Censorship," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* official journal of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute, July 1929, 240.
[2] *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* April 1929, 8.
[3] Ibid, 25.

global economics and politics. Unless the League's cinematic activities, this chapter makes clear, had tangible benefits for American business or diplomatic interests, then they were unlikely to receive needed support from Hollywood or the US State Department. By providing a history of the International Film Congress and the IECI, this chapter sheds light on the League's inner workings and ambivalent relationship with the United States. Concerns over an alleged American monopoly on film production and distribution were contentious within the ICIC and provoked conflicting interpretations of the postwar peace: one that placed the League at the center of global arbitration and another that placed the United States there.

…….

On July 28, 1924, Julien Luchaire—Henri Bergson's friend and expert adviser—presented a report to the ICIC on the "Relations of the Cinematograph to Intellectual Life." In the report, Luchaire first made a case for cinema's unprecedented availability around the world. "Never at any time," Lucahire argued, "has any product of human thought enjoyed so widespread and rapid a circulation."[4] Because films, especially Hollywood films, had become so ubiquitous in Europe, he questioned whether or not it was healthy that "only the Bible and the Koran have an indisputably larger circulation that that of the latest film from Los Angeles."[5] Luchaire, however, was not as inherently opposed to Hollywood as many of his colleagues were. In fact, he credited Hollywood's global reach with helping to universalize the medium. To ensure that a film would profit in foreign markets, he complimented Hollywood's tendency to "compose works in a form that will enable them to be understood and appreciated by spectators of the most

[4] Julien Luchaire, "Relations of the Cinematograph to Intellectual Life," July 28, 1924. Available in: William Seabury, *Motion Picture Problems: The Cinema and the League of Nations* (New York, NY: Avondale Press, 1929), 236.
[5] Ibid.

varied races and countries."[6] In addition, Luchaire celebrated the fact that films were silent and therefore not prone to basic language barriers. These characteristics distinguished cinema from other major art forms and made it "intrinsically international."[7]

Luchaire was a noted French scholar who specialized in Italian history and literature. He was the author of many books that celebrated Italian and French contributions to western civilization. The emergence of German militarism in the early 1900s concerned him greatly. He was part of a large cohort of French intellectuals who considered German expansion a threat to what he considered a common Latin identity. The peoples of the Iberian and Italian peninsulas, he argued, had a linguistic and cultural bond that made active diplomacy natural and easy to navigate. During the war, he and popular Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero founded the propaganda magazine, *Review of Latin Nations*. Like much of the literature at that time, the publication was vehemently nationalistic and called for a strengthening of pan-Latinism in Europe to combat the spread of Germanic influences. Luchaire and Ferrero used the magazine to articulate what exactly constituted as "latin-ness" and "Germanic-ness," as well as how one could identify their distinct attributes. Ignoring the complexity of the Classical world, they focused predominantly upon art and literature to promote a conception of Germany's newfound aggression as a challenge to the permanence of some monolithic Latin Europe. The magazine ceased publication after the war and Luchaire became a predominant figure in championing the spirit of internationalism.

Though his actions seemed contradictory, they demonstrated how popular conceptions of nationalism and internationalism operated under the same basic assumption that cultures were akin to fixed units that required their own sovereign spaces. Few intellectuals questioned the

[6] Ibid, 238.
[7] Ibid, 237.

permanence of nation-states as a means of organization and figured that an enduring peace hinged on improving the dialogue between them, a chief priority of the League. Films, Luchaire presumed, were an underappreciated educational tool and would help bridge various cultural gaps while simultaneously reaffirming longstanding national identities.

The main issue that Luchaire brought to the ICIC was one of content. As with other advocates for the Pax Cinemana, glamorous war dramas troubled him deeply. He also feared that if too many films romanticized crime and urban violence, they might compromise the integrity of Europe's youth. As an aficionado of Greco-Roman culture, he could not resist the urge to frame Greek theater as the ultimate benchmark for the maturation of cinema. Sophocles and Aristophanes, he suggested, produced works for the masses but never delved into the trite sentimentalism of the usual Hollywood fare. "It is essential," Luchaire declared, "to consider without delay what can be done to ensure that [film's] influence will at the same time be moral and instructive."[8]

Luchiare put forth three resolutions that he thought would improve the intellectual capacity of film and make it useful as an instrument of international understanding. His first resolution called for the compilation and publication of an international catalogue of films for scientific and medical purposes. The catalogue would use the Brussels system of bibliographic classification to detail the film's basic features: description of content, production credits, length, date it was produced, and its availability for purchase or exchange. Too many universities and research centers around the world, he reckoned, were oblivious to the fact that hundreds of films had been produced since the early 1900s which would ultimately prove beneficial to professionals and students in all academic disciplines. Medical doctors could observe

[8] Ibid, 245.

complicated surgical procedures while zoologists could observe the behavior of animals that were inaccessible to them personally. Moreover, historians could actually "see" seminal moments in other people's history. The sharing of films across borders might also strengthen the relationships between distant institutions, such as the International Bureau of Education (IBE) and the International Health Office (IHO), a central aim of the ICIC. To promote these goals, Luchaire put forth another resolution that called for the ICIC to organize an international exhibition of educational and scientific films.

The proposed catalogue and exhibition of films would help lay the groundwork for the wider integration of films into teaching and education. Luchaire was not as bold as some his contemporaries who believed earnestly that films would soon replace the need for blackboards, books, and even teachers. He championed film as an adjunct to teaching and denounced the calls from some circles to develop classes entirely around films. Instead, he argued, educators needed to recognize that each subject and lesson had its own needs and expectations. A standard means of incorporating film into the curriculum was impossible. Discovering the many roles of film in education, he proclaimed, was a process that would require the ongoing support of the League. Part of the process was holding a regular film congress for those interested in discussing and expanding film's implications for science and education.

Luchaire's most important resolution called for the creation of an international film congress that would bring both industry professionals and educators together to discuss the role of film in shaping culture and the status quo. According to the report, "the scientific artists and educational interests affected by the development of cinematography would be the first question to be examined."[9] However, Luchaire recognized that the educational benefits of cinema did not

[9] Ibid, 262-263.

always align with the financial motives of the entertainment industry. The international congress, therefore, would also create an opportunity to discuss pressing issues relevant to the success of the major studios, such as censorship laws, tariffs, and property rights. Lastly, the film congress would prove useful for gauging if there were a need for the League to create a permanent "International Cinema Federation" comprised of representatives from every country's respective film industry.[10] The ICIC adopted each of Luchaire's resolutions and soon after hired him to serve as the first director of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IICC). The IICC was a French-sponsored organization created to serve as the executive branch for the ICIC in Geneva. From its Paris headquarters, Luchaire appointed himself and two of his associates, Fredrick Cornelissen and Jean Locquin, to plan and direct the first International Film Congress. It marked the League of Nations' first official foray into promoting film as "a means of good will and better understanding of the nations."[11]

Luchaire, Cornelissen, and Locquin had no personal experience producing films or working in the film industry. Cornelissen was an advisor in the General Assembly of the League of Nations and Locquin was a prominent art critic and member of the French Chamber of Deputies. Nevertheless, they were optimistic that they could bring together educators, diplomats, and the "best minds" from every film industry in the world, specifically Hollywood.[12] Their plan was to hold the Film Congress in Paris for three full days in June 1925. They mailed out hundreds of invitations to interested parties, including the likes of Charles Chaplin, D.W. Griffith, and Cecil B. DeMille, and assured reporters that the event would have a large

---

[10] Ibid, 259.
[11] "Great Attendance Expected at International Film Congress," *Moving Picture World*, May 30, 1925, 518. "Discuss Films as Culture Aid," *The Film Daily,* July 31, 1924, 2.
[12] Stephen Bush, "Film Congress Plans Passage of Some Films Duty Free," *Moving Picture World,* June 6, 1925, 617.

attendance and produce practical results.[13] They created a program that addressed four main issues: the need to produce and exchange more educational films; the need for a permanent film bureau in the League of Nations; censorship laws and artistic freedom; and the feasibility of producing international co-productions. Though the Film Congress garnered considerable attention in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, industry leaders from the United States were not as receptive.

By the time spring had arrived, the Film Congress was already in jeopardy. Almost every invitee from the United States had declined to attend. According to the planning committee, the American delegates were all simply "too busy," but summer was also the most popular season for the movie-going public, and industry leaders figured they could not travel to Europe and risk hampering the release of their latest films.[14] As a result, the committee made the decision to postpone the Film Congress until October. "It is felt by all," the committee explained, "that without a strong representative delegation from across the water the Congress would entirely lose its international character and the great purposes underlying the convocation would be entirely defeated."[15] Though Luchaire and his cohorts were certainly committed to maintaining the international character of the Film Congress, they also knew fully well that the United States controlled at least eighty percent of the world's film business. If the Film Congress was going to have any chance of achieving its lofty ambitions, it needed at least some support from the American film industry. Without the presence of American delegates, many German film producers also lost interest because they had hoped the event would create an opportunity to discuss the flood of American films into German theaters. That issue, more than the ones

[13] Stephen Bush, "What Happened to the U.C.I.?," *Moving Picture World*, May 30, 1925, 514.
[14] Stephen Bush, "Film Congress Stands Postponed; America "Too Busy,"" *Moving Picture World,* August 1, 1925, 501.
[15] Ibid.

Luchaire had stated officially, was the chief concern of leading figures in the German film industry. Unfortunately for the League, the postponement was a sign of impending frustration.

By October, Luchaire and his compatriots were forced once again to postpone the Film Congress. After much deliberation, they decided to reschedule for June 1926. Even with nearly a year to plan, Luchaire could not guarantee the presence of American delegates, and he postponed the event for yet a third time. Because of the ongoing planning issues, Luchaire decided to seek assistance from the French Chamber of Commerce of Films and let leaders from inside the French film industry develop the precise nature of the program. "Only in one respect," a reporter noted, "will there be no alteration of the original program; the U.S.A. will be shown to a front seat."[16] After fifteen months of planning, Luchaire finally confirmed that the Film Congress would run without fail from September 27 to October 3. The weeklong proceedings would include formal sessions as well as a series of galas and banquets held at the finest Parisian establishments, including the Paris Opera House and Versailles.[17] French, English, and German were chosen as the official languages of the Film Congress and hundreds of invitees had agreed to attend.[18] For many others, however, these developments were too little too late.

Coverage from leading film journals in the United States was only lukewarm to the Film Congress. According to *The Film Daily*, "What started off like a cyclone has developed into a delicate zephyr." After mentioning Hollywood's previous "hands off policy," the report condescendingly quipped that the gathering would prove "interesting."[19] British and German newspapers similarly questioned whether the Film Congress was worth the time and effort. Many predicted that it would turn into an awkward convention of diplomats and educators pompously

---

[16] Stephen Bush, "Now in Force in Italy and Hungary," *Moving Picture World,* November 7, 1925, 30.
[17] "International Film Congress," *The Film Daily,* August 23, 1926, 6.
[18] "Film Congress Accepts German," *The Film Daily,* August 16, 1926, 2.
[19] "That Paris Congress," *The Film Daily*, September 7, 1926, 1.

discussing the features of an industry about which they knew little. The harshest criticism, however, came surprisingly from France. The enormously influential Jean Sapene openly mocked the event and claimed that "under the present conditions no practical results can develop."[20] Sapene was not only one of France's most respected film directors and producers, but he was also the publisher of the widely read newspaper *Le Matin*. Without Sapene's approval, reporters at *The Film Daily* honestly wondered if the Film Congress would be held at all.[21] Despite the negative press coverage, the event proceeded as scheduled.

The Film Congress brought together approximately 450 delegates from twenty-nine countries. France was by far the most represented with 211 delegates. Germany was second with forty-three, and Great Britain third with twenty-two. Japan, China, and India, the only Asian nation represented, had twelve, three, and two delegates respectively. The formal program laid out six broad panels that focused on the following issues: production and distribution; instruction and education; trade and legal problems; the relationship between cinema and other arts; the creation of a permanent film bureau in the League of Nations; and lastly the preparation for a future follow-up congress.[22] In addition, one delegate from each nation was selected to participate in a commission that represented the interests of his national film industry. The commission then voted on a series of resolutions in which each delegate agreed to work. The most favored resolutions included technical requirements, such as standardizing the speed of projectors in theaters and ensuring that theater-owners always screened a film's production credits. Other resolutions revolved around Luchaire's original ambitions to create an international catalogue of films and an exchange program between national film archives. The

[20] "Congress May Fail," *The Film Daily,* August 30, 1926.
[21] Ibid.
[22] "World Film Congress," *The Educational Screen,* June 1926, 347-348.

remaining resolutions echoed the central mission of the League: avoid producing films "which might breed hatred between peoples or perpetuate the idea of war" in favor of ones that "place in evidence the beauties and qualities of foreign people."[23] Though the Film Congress did promote cinema as a means of international understanding, the sentiment eluded leaders in the American film industry.

The Film Congress proceeded without any official delegates from the United States, which diminished its prestige considerably. Ten Hollywood insiders did participate but only as unofficial guests, including William Sheafe Chase of the Federal Motion Picture Council and Guy Croswell Smith of United Artists. "Nevertheless," one reporter noted, "the Americans were conspicuous by their absence during the week's confab."[24] The Americans' cold and distant attitude to the proceedings stemmed from the assertive decision by Will Hays, head of the MPPDA, to decline any involvement in the Film Congress. According to an official statement from Hays' office, the event should have been postponed because "America undoubtedly leads the world in motion pictures, particularly in such branches as educational pictures, but if we attempted to tell other nations that, they would want our words backed up by proof … and that would take time."[25] Luchaire and the International Committee of International Cooperation (ICIC) were of course unwilling continuously to bend to Hays and Hollywood's ongoing requests for postponements and became frustrated that Hays had framed himself and the industry he represented as a victim. "We felt," the statement continued, "that the congress at this time might easily develop into an anti-American affair."[26] Resentment toward Hays' decision

[23] "The Paris Congress," *The Film Daily,* October 17, 1926, 22-23.
[24] "1st International Film Congress Felts Absence of U.S. Representatives," *Variety*, October 13, 1926, 3.
[25] "Hays Declines Part in Film Congress," *The New York Times*, July 1, 1926, 20.
[26] Ibid.

gradually mounted amongst the delegates and spilled over into the activities of the Film Congress.

The United States' domination of the world's film business was not one of the official concerns of the engagement. However, the topic allegedly surfaced repeatedly throughout the proceedings. "Europe and the rest of the world," one French delegate declared in front of a sympathetic audience, "will pay the stupendous tribute of 2,740,000,000 francs to the motion picture kings of America this year."[27] Using the panel on trade and censorship as an opportunity to rally support, the delegate continued, "We must put an end to this tribute to America."[28] According to some reports, indiscriminate attacks on American producers were a staple of every official meeting.[29] French, German, and English delegates were by most accounts the source of such vilification. "Camouflaging its motives with an altruistic program," a dispatch to *The New York Times* noted, "the Congress is seeking to perfect a combination against the American film monopoly."[30] William Seabury, a leader within American film trade associations, tried to find common ground and alleviate some of the pressure by insisting that independent producers in the United States had the same concerns as European producers. They too, he argued, could not compete with the handful of Hollywood moguls who had control over the offerings in nearly ninety-five percent of the nation's theaters.[31] The plight of independent American producers was of little concern to the European delegates, many of whom called for the creation of various European cinema trusts to alleviate Hollywood's control of film markets around the world.[32]

---

[27] "Combine Against U.S. Paris Congress Aim," *The Film Daily,* September 30, 1926, 4.
[28] Ibid.
[29] "Tirade against U.S. awaited at Paris," *The Film Daily*, September 29, 1926, 1.
[30] Ibid, 1.
[31] "Presents Case of Independent Producers," *The New York Times*, September 29, 1926.
[32] "Film Congress Closes," *The New York Times,* October 3, 1926, 21.

Other delegates took aim at what they considered Hollywood's derogatory portrayal of foreigners. Those from Mexico, for example, criticized the various "Mexican bandit" films that flooded theaters every year. They believed that the United States had a dangerous and disproportionate control over how the world saw their country and its people. Their frustrations dovetailed into a larger discussion on how films produced in one nation should portray former adversaries from the war. Certain German delegates called for a complete ban on World War I films. Dutch delegates, on the other hand, wanted simply to suppress nationalistic films that were "susceptible of engendering hatred between nations."[33] The Belgian delegates, however, found the suggestion far too ambiguous. What of patriotic films, they asked? Was there to be an international ban on films "illustrating the heroism of soldiers and citizens in defense of their native country?"[34] One reporter likened the heated debate to a movie "mob scene" and noted how wartime animosities had resurfaced.

The internal bickering, coupled with the absence of American delegates, compelled most reporters to treat the Film Congress as a definite failure. "The laugh of the Congress," one critic wrote, "came from the fact that American screen interests held aloof."[35] *The Film Renter* claimed that if the Film Congress had produced any results then they were "absurdly small."[36] For others, the entire event amounted to little more than a convenient excuse to embark on a weeklong Parisian getaway. French film icon Jean Sapene insisted that everything played out precisely as he had predicted. American involvement never came to fruition and the French and German delegates used it as an opportunity to complain about their own industry's struggles. "The

[33] "Film Congress Row Over Pacific Movies," *The New York Times*, September 30, 1926, 7.
[34] Ibid.
[35] "U.S. Screen Interests Pass Up International Film Congress," *Variety*, October 6, 1926, 39.
[36] "Speaking Editorially," *Motion Picture News*, October 30, 1926, 1660.

resolutions adopted by the Congress," Sapene reported in *Le Matin*, are "but so many platonic words."[37]

In the popular magazine *L'Intransigeant*, leading French film critic Boisyvon similarly dismissed the Film Congress as pointless banter. "You must never ask practical solutions of a Congress," he asserted mockingly. "The people present had no power to make laws. If they had spoken of the beautiful summer and the park of Versailles the results would have been identical."[38] Boisyvon echoed the common frustrations that many individuals had with the ICIC and the League of Nations at large. Were massive intergovernmental organizations actually capable of delivering results, or were they simply mouthpieces for elite statesmen? A reporter for a British trade journal summarized the reception in London and channeled the attitude of League critics who had pegged it as the ultimate expression of pointless bureaucracy:

> Several millions of assorted words have been uttered. A lavish banquet has been consumed. Compliments on every possible subject have been paid to every possible person. In a word, this congress has passed off in exactly the same manner as most congresses do … And now that it is at an end, there still remains considerable difficulty in finding any very satisfactory excuse for its existence.[39]

Though most attendees claimed they had garnered very little from the formal sessions, others found casual conversation between delegates useful for the sale of films across borders. According to one reporter, "nothing much happened on the floor of the convention, but a lot of real business was transacted in hotel lobbies."[40] The comment reflected how far the Film Congress had veered from its original ambitions. Luchaire's primary focus was to expand the practical benefits of film in education, science, and diplomacy. Clandestine business deals were

---

[37] "European Film Congress Fails, Lacking U.S. Aid," *The Moving Picture World,* October 16, 1926, 1.
[38] William Johnston, "An Editor on Broadway: The Week in Review," *Motion Picture News*, November 13, 1926, 1837.
[39] "Speaking Editorially," *Motion Picture News*, October 30, 1926, 1660.
[40] Ibid.

the least of his concerns. Despite the negative press coverage and the ambivalent response from delegates, Luchaire still believed that he and the International Committee on International Cooperation (ICIC) had a responsibility to strengthen the role of cinema in the League's activities. He was tenacious and at the closing ceremony announced formally that he would create a permanent film bureau within the League and hold a second International Film Congress the following year in Berlin.

Unfortunately, the second Film Congress faced the same challenges as the first. Luchaire could not secure participation from Hollywood leaders and scrambled to meet necessary deadlines. Because the event was planned for Berlin, leaders of the German film industry took on a greater role in organizing the program. They made it clear to Luchaire that their primary goals had little to do with the educational capabilities of film or vague notions of international understanding and peace. The German hosts wanted to use the event as an opportunity to create a formal bulwark against American films saturating European theaters. Luchaire disagreed and pressured his German cohorts to reconsider the Congress' aims. As tensions mounted, Luchaire resigned from the planning committee and withdrew the support of the ICIC in May 1927.[41] The Film Congress was put on hold for another year. Luchaire went on to create a film bureau in the League of Nations and guaranteed that it would not harm American producers.[42] However, Lucahire struggled to secure needed finances for the bureau or to steer it toward any concrete goals. The bureau was largely irrelevant to the activities of the ICIC and did little more than endorse Hollywood films with internationalist and pacifist themes, in addition to holding the occasional competition for amateur films that focused upon the League.[43] These shortcomings

[41] "Congress Postponed," *The Film Daily*, May 17, 1927, 1-4.
[42] "Says Bureau Won't Hurt U.S.," *The Film Daily,* October 20, 1926, 7.
[43] See: "League of Nations Offers Prizes for Short Subjects," *The Film Daily*, May 4, 1938, 7. "League Honors Polo," *The Film Daily*, June 4, 1938, 1.

were just some of many issues that Lucahire's colleagues had with his leadership. Faced with heated internal opposition, Luchaire ultimately decided to resign from his position as director. When the second International Film Congress finally commenced in August 1928, the League of Nations had no part in its proceedings. For many leaders in Europe's film industries, the absence of the League was a blessing in disguise.

The Film Congress in Berlin attracted over 600 delegates from every European country, including Russia, as well as ones from Asia and South America. The United States did not participate despite receiving multiple invitations.[44] The German organizers worked closely with the German National Cinema Theater Owners Association and made no attempt to mask their priorities. "The present convention," one German organizer explained, "is purely for business and does not touch on the intellectual and spiritual value of the movies."[45] Alfred Hugenberg, a German media mogul who controlled Universum Film AG and later helped Adolf Hitler become Chancellor, made it clear to the press that the Berlin Film Congress was a springboard for the "Pan-European campaign against American pictures."[46] Speaking on behalf of Hugenberg as well as the Berlin Chamber of Commerce, film producer Ludwig Klitzsch told the delegates in his opening speech, "we see in Europe the idea of cooperation in the film industry growing and in this manner the word 'film-Europe' came into being."[47] Though Klitszch stopped short of openly lambasting the American monopoly, his notion of "film-Europe" became the unofficial mantra of the Congress. "European films must be safeguarded now," an English delegate followed up, "Europe has richer and more interesting stories and literature in which to base

[44] "International Film Congress in Session," *The Film Daily,* August 23, 1928, 1-2.
[45] "Germans ask Union against our Films," *The New York Times*, August 23, 1928, 9.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

film."[48] He and many others delegates wondered, how Europe, a bastion of alleged high art, could not compete with the works of the Hollywood dream factory. The ubiquity of American films, the Congress made clear, was not only a financial burden for European nations, but it was also a blow to longstanding cultural identities. Hollywood's visibility in Europe was a manifestation of American, not European, hegemony over the global economy and exportation of culture. This was a hard reality for many European intellectuals, particularly German, French, and English, to accept.

Unlike the Film Congress in Paris, no one questioned whether or not the Berlin Congress had produced any practical results. Reporters covered two developments in detail. First, delegates from seventeen European countries as well as Turkey and India created the International Federation of Exhibitors (IFF) "to protect European film interests against present dangers."[49] These "dangers," the press understood, was an obvious reference to nothing other than American films. The IFF's goal was to unite exhibitors and distributors across borders to reduce substantially the number of films imported from the United States. Though a recent conference in Geneva on trade guaranteed that restrictions on imported films would be abolished by 1930, many governments, primarily Germany's, figured that protective tariffs were needed to safeguard domestic film industries. The goal was to curb American releases by at least thirty percent, which, the IFF figured, was possible only if European and select Asian film industries agreed to stand in solidarity against the Hollywood behemoth.[50] The notion of a cohesive "film-

---

[48] "European Exhibitors Organize to Contest U.S. Film Control," *Exhibitors Herald and Moving Picture World,* September 1, 1928, 27.
[49] Ibid.
[50] "Germans ask Union against our Films," *The New York Times*, August 23, 1928, 9. Note: Not everyone in Europe's film industries agreed with the IFF and its plans. Michael Gourland, President of the Affiliated European Producers, promoted a "Live and Let Live Policy" instead. His organization represented fifteen major film companies from Germany, Russia, and France, and was responsible for selling their respective films to American theaters. Consequently, Gourland found the IFF's demands "ill-timed" since their

Europe" was therefore rooted less in the humanitarian agenda of Luchaire and the League and more in the business agenda of German media moguls. The second development concerned the continued release of what Leopold Gutmann, President of the German National Cinema Theater Owners Association, called "hate films."

Gutmann brought attention to the recent release of *Dawn* (1928), a British World War I film that dramatized the life and death of Edith Cavell. Cavell was a nurse during the war who had decided to treat patients regardless of their national affiliation. However, after helping hundreds of soldiers escape from German-occupied Belgium, a German firing squad executed her after a speedy and highly publicized trial. *Dawn* was one of the most controversial films of the 1920s due to its derogatory depiction of Germans as sadistic warmongers. Gutmann knew that the line between propaganda and patriotism was thin, but he hoped exhibitors would agree to ban films, like *Dawn*, "which might arouse international hatred."[51] It was here that the Berlin Congress channeled many of the ambitions Luchaire had in Paris. Even though the Congress did not have the support of the League and was promoted strictly as a business operation, many noted how "international understanding was assuming greater importance as an economic question."[52] This was an important observation.

On the surface, the Film Congresses at Paris and Berlin seemed like minor moments in the history of cinema. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes apparent that they occurred at a time when the most pressing questions in economic policy and foreign policy had overlapped. Did free trade cultivate healthy competition and thereby improve the standard of

---

"restrictive measures come just when America is not only in a receptive mood toward foreign pictures but is even anxious to receive them." See: "Gourland Sailing to Make Plea for Free Trade in World Films," *Exhibitors Herald and Moving Picture World*, September 15, 1928, 27.

[51] Ibid. "German Editor Calls Film Parley a Failure on Propaganda Issue," *Exhibitors Herald and Moving Picture World*, October 6, 1928, 36.

[52] "Germans ask Union against our Films," *The New York Times*, August 23, 1928, 9.

living for all? Or did it simply make it easier for monopolies, like Hollywood and the American film industry, to regulate markets to their own advantage? These and related questions were integral to common understandings of world peace, particularly among American businessmen and statesmen who believed that what benefited the economy of the United States inevitably benefitted the recuperating economies of Europe. Will Hays, who many European delegates blamed for undermining the international spirit of the Film Congresses by preventing prominent Americans from participating, adhered to such sentiment.

Hays' decision to steer Hollywood interests away from the Film Congresses mirrored his larger ambivalence to the League. When serving as Warren Harding's campaign manager, Hays, of course, played an integral role in preventing the United States from becoming a League member. He agreed with its central tenets but did not want to undermine the authority of the United States federal government by bogging it down with European bureaucracy. The same could be said of his reaction to the Film Congresses. As head of the MPPDA, he welcomed notions of international understanding and cooperation but refused to engage in any activity that might compromise the interests of the American film industry. Only a few years earlier, Hays had actually visited Europe and celebrated "the importance of motion pictures as an instrument of international amity."[53] He spoke at great length about their diplomatic potential and believed that they would unite divergent nations and societies. Many of his statements appeared as if they had come directly from Luchaire and his initial report on the importance of cinema to the League. However, he concluded that intergovernmental organizations were incapable of maintaining peace. "The international understanding of the peoples of the world," he argued,

[53] Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 369.

"will be brought about by the right kind of American motion pictures."[54] By stressing the importance of American motion pictures, he made his purpose and worldview clear.

Hays had little interest in creating relationships through the equal sharing of what the European delegates considered Pan-European or international films that championed only the best qualities of a given society. To him, the world needed distinctly American films in order for everyone, anywhere, to appreciate and ultimately accept the American way of life. According to one observer, Hays believed without a doubt that "America is the best of all places in the best of all possible worlds."[55] He was exceptionally proud of his nation and considered it his duty to share it with the rest of the world. "Every film that goes from America abroad," Hays declared, "shall correctly portray to the world the purpose, the ideals, the accomplishments, the opportunities, and the life of America … We are going to sell America to the world with American motion pictures." Hays did not want the United States to be part of a family of nations or Hollywood to be part of a family of film industries that shared a similar standing. He saw the United States and Hollywood as benevolent purveyors of liberal democracy that would lead the world by example.

When many European delegates passionately criticized Hays and Hollywood business practices at the Film Congresses, they echoed the common confusion about and dissatisfaction many Europeans had with the United States' powerful new position on the world stage. Were Europeans, they thought, expected simply to bow to the demands of American businesses? Was the American film industry the first appendage of American imperialism in Europe? Clearly, the Film Congresses represented far more than pedestrian chitchat. They were embedded within the larger geo-political shifts that placed the United States and its industries at the forefront of a new

[54] "Will Hays Returns from Trip Abroad," *Motion Picture News*, October 27, 1923, 1979.
[55] "The Memoirs of Will Hays—The Life of an American," *Motion Picture Herald,* September 10, 1955, 18.

international order that challenged the status quo of the previous century. The devastation caused by World War I created seemingly endless opportunities for American businesses to invest in rebuilding Europe in a manner that would benefit the American economy. Hays understood this fully and by rejecting the Congresses and by working to maintain the flow of American films into European theaters, he figured he was doing his part in the greater effort to Americanize the world and secure a lasting peace.

To comprehend fully Hays' attitudes towards the Film Congresses and their significance to the League, it is necessary to understand the origins of American foreign policy in the twentieth century. By the onset of World War I, the United States had already established itself as a regional power with considerable influence on world affairs. The administrations of William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft, for example, championed American expansion into Oceania and Latin America. Steeped in notions of manifest destiny, their foreign policies placed the frontier far beyond the coast of California. In an effort to flex American might on the world stage, they mimicked the aggressive strategies of European imperial states, particularly Great Britain and France, and annexed formally Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. Though American expansion was controversial and faced tremendous criticism from prominent liberals and evangelicals, it was firmly in sync with what would become one of the guiding principles of American statecraft and peacekeeping in the twentieth century: the Open Door.

Secretary of State John Hay insisted that America's economic and political interests hinged on preserving an "open door" to the world's markets. Taking specific interest in China, Hay assumed that American world hegemony would come from keeping foreign markets accessible to American investment and trade. Under the mantra of "free and open," Hay

articulated what critics saw as the United States' unique brand of empire-building. Equal access, Hay figured, would naturally translate to American dominance and, by dominating the global economy, the United States could wield soft power around the world, put an end to nationalist aggression, and prevent future wars. The idea was a pivot in American foreign policy.

Instead of avoiding foreign entanglements, the Open Door policy allowed the United States to penetrate gradually the markets of imperial Europe, Russia, and Japan and diminish the control they had over the lucrative markets of their colonial dependencies. Moreover, proponents assumed that America's intervention in foreign economies would provide foreign populations with the opportunity to embrace liberal democracy and thereby reach their greatest potential. Woodrow Wilson, for example, assumed that exposure to American notions of freedom and liberty would rub off on other countries and ultimately bring them peace and prosperity. The Open Door policy reflected the conception of a capitalist world-system that placed the United States as the arbitrator of global politics via the marketplace. When outlining his Fourteen Points and the Covenant of the League of Nations, Wilson championed the Open Door and framed the League as the vehicle for preserving it.

Though historians often discuss Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Covenant of the League as the seminal expressions of liberal idealism and internationalism after World War I, they surprisingly do not employ any of the terms typically associated with these ideologies. For example, the Fourteen Points and the Covenant never explicitly mention "democracy" or "self-determination." However, they do endlessly discuss the need for equal trade. A humanitarian agenda is implicit in these documents, but it is impossible to separate it from questions of economics. Without a hint of irony, Wilson, like many influential statesmen who succeeded him,

believed that what was in the long-term interest of foreign governments was also in the best interests of the American economy.

By fixing American statecraft to global economic expansion, Wilson framed the Open Door as both an economic and humanitarian initiative without fully addressing how these two interests might conflict. Therefore, he and his supporters assumed the League was needed to serve as a mediator. However, Wilson's opponents, like Will Hays, argued that the League might prove needlessly meddlesome to American businesses. Though Wilson and Hays had many political differences, they shared a belief in the necessity of the Open Door. It transcended party affiliations and personal disputes. They simply disagreed on the best means of implementing the policy. According to Hays, it was his responsibility to make the world accessible to American film releases:

> American films have not always entered other countries through the wide, unguarded "open door" by which the films of other nations have come to us. Too often we have had to knock at doors on which someone—usually a government film commission—had tacked up a sign reading "Not Welcome—Unless," the warning usually being followed by various terms and taxes. It was one of my most interesting responsibilities to find out the reasons for those conditions, to carry on negotiations to lighten or remove them, and, with the active cooperation of our own State Department, to get new signs put up reading "Welcome, If"—with the "ifs" as few as possible.[56]

Wilson and his supporters figured a League of Nations under the authority of the United States was the proper course to maintaining the Open Door. Hays and many of his Republican colleagues, however, stressed the need for American autonomy and laissez-faire economics. Still, the primary goal was the same: dominate the global marketplace and ensure a lasting peace.

Hays' rejection of the Film Congresses represented a striking display of his interpretation of the Open Door. Michael Gourland, an associate of Hays who served as President of the Affiliated European Producers, tried to champion the Open Door at the Film Congress in Berlin.

[56] Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 504.

Instead of creating a coalition for the sole purpose of blocking American films from entering European theaters, he promoted a "Live and Let Live Policy." Gourland's organization represented fifteen major European film companies from Germany, Russia, and France, and it was responsible for selling their respective films to American theaters.[57] According to Gourland, the purported demands for restrictive measures were badly timed since they "come just when America is not only in a receptive mood toward foreign pictures but is even anxious to receive them."[58] Most European delegates at the Congresses, however, claimed to see the "Live and Let Live Policy," and others like it, for what they truly were: thinly veiled opportunities for the United States to monopolize the world's film market while flaunting notions of freedom and fair trade. William Seabury, one of the few Americans to attend both Congresses as an unofficial guest, published an assessment of the events in his book *Motion Picture Problems: The Cinema and the League of Nations*:

> The lesson which this international event, of such great possibilities, teaches is the lesson which the trade in America has consistently taught for many years. The industry's only interest in discussion of ways and means of improving the service of the trade to the public, is to vitiate the discussion and by skillful publicity prevent the accomplishment of any substantial results … the industry in America demonstrated again, on this occasion internationally, that oil will not mix with water, that the industry will not affiliate or cooperate in any sincere effort with government, with moralists, publicists or with intellectuals.[59]

Clearly, the Film Congresses failed to live up to their initial purpose of furthering international understanding through educational films. Ironically, they accomplished little besides fueling resentment against the United States. However, Seabury's remarks were not entirely accurate. Hays and other leaders in the American film industry were willing to participate in the League's

---

[57] "Russia-Germany to Join U.S. Invasion," *Exhibitors Daily Review,* August 21, 1928, 2.
[58] "Gourland Sailing to Make Plea for Free Trade in World Films," *Exhibitors Herald and Moving Picture World*, September 15, 1928, 27.
[59] William Seabury, *Motion Picture Problems: The Cinema and the League of Nations* (New York, NY: Avondale Press, 1929), 160-161.

film projects so long as they fell under the patronage of the fascist Prime Minister of Italy, Benito Mussolini.

Like most dictators, Mussolini was an avid cinephile.[60] Before he had become Il Duce "The Leader," Mussolini attended Roman movie theaters routinely. He enjoyed the works of America silent film comedians and by the late 1920s had developed an infatuation with Anita Page, an American starlet known for her brief but lucrative stint at MGM studios. For years he wrote her love letters and allegedly even proposed marriage. The stylish trappings of Hollywood enthralled the equally ostentatious Mussolini who understood the persuasive power of cinema and its significance in global commerce. As he tightened his grip over the hearts and minds of the Italian public, he relied heavily on films to propagate his authoritarian agenda. He famously commissioned the construction of Cinecitta, Europe's largest film studio, and gave it the slogan: "*l cinema e la'arma piu forte"* ("Cinema is the most powerful weapon"). Though Mussolini's role in developing state propaganda films is widely known, few have tackled his immense contributions to the League's film pursuits.

Mussolini did not attend the Film Congresses but he did agree with Luchaire and the ICIC's initial plan to position film as an aid to international education. "[Film] can bring the world together," Mussolini exclaimed sincerely, "it can settle all differences, it can become the international medium, educator, and adjuster; it can prevent war."[61] Coming from a man who built a police state by taking control of his nation's media, these words appear painfully ironic. However, between 1928 and 1935, Mussolini worked tirelessly to present Italian fascism as a modern ideology firmly in sync with the League and popular notions of internationalism.

[60] Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Kim Jong Il all shared a passionate interest in Hollywood cinema and used films to sustain their rule.
[61] "Mussolini's Hope in Screen," *Variety*, September 21, 1927, 1.

Cultivating the exchange and diffusion of educational films was one means of broadcasting fascist Italy's humanitarian work to the world. Mussolini recognized that the League needed a permanent institution dedicated entirely to film and noticed that an occasional congress was not producing enough practical results. Moreover, he realized, such gatherings all too easily descended into fruitless bickering. As a result, he made an agreement with the ICIC to finance and develop the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IECI).

The IECI was an official appendage of the League tasked with cultivating educational cinema's power as "an ambassador of a better international understanding and universal peace."[62] Several months after the Film Congress in Berlin, Mussolini held an inauguration celebration for the opening of the IECI on November 5, 1928, at its initial headquarters in the magnificent Villa Falconieri, a mansion located several miles outside of Rome. Built in the mid-sixteenth century, the Villa Falconieri had housed many influential figures, including Pope Paul III and German Emperor Wilhelm II. It was also within walking distance to Mussolini's private residence, making it easy for him to oversee the IECI's affairs. Though he did not serve on the board of directors, his presence was felt everywhere. He made regular visits to the Villa and had a personal relationship with many of its staff members.

At the inauguration, Mussolini gave another one of his characteristic speeches in front of Victor Emmanuel III, the King of Italy, and dozens of League officials. Speaking in French to appease the predominantly French directors of the ICIC, Mussolini exclaimed how he granted the Villa to the League so that film could further the development of world civilization and "facilitate and enhance the cultural relations between peoples."[63] The French participants,

---

[62] George R. Canty, "International Film Censorship," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* official journal of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute, July 1929, 240.
[63] "International Institute of Educational Film," *The Educational Screen,* March 1929, 73.

however, knew that he had additional intentions. "Mussolini is persuaded," purported an official report from the League, "that Cine performances of all kinds … will uplift the human mind and produce a more intelligent conception of Fascism."[64] Because the League rather than Mussolini had the authority to appoint the members of the IECI's governing body, few assumed that the organization would become an explicit advertisement for fascism. Adherents were confident that the League was in control, not Mussolini.[65] The initial governing body consisted of sixteen individuals from ten countries.[66] Notable members included French film pioneer Louis Lumiere and Japanese statesmen and author Nitobe Inazo. Most officials were simply thrilled Mussolini had taken it upon himself to cover all the needed operating costs. Funding was a looming issue for League affairs, particularly those that fell under the auspices of the ICIC. Many governments were unsurprisingly apprehensive about footing the bill for what were promoted as purely intellectual pursuits. Mussolini's involvement, however, was a point of contention. According to trade journals, his proposition did not receive a positive reception among the delegates at the ICIC's educational conference at The Hague.[67] Several League officials expressed their hope that France would fund and base the organization instead. Will Hays, on the other hand, spotted an opportunity and wanted to involve the American film industry immediately.

Hays believed in the central objective of the IECI and worked with Mussolini and the IECI's director Luciano de Feo to ensure that his right-hand man Carl Milliken, Secretary

[64] Eric Drummond, General Secretary of the League of Nations, Report on Creation of Cinematographic International Institute, November 21, 1927, MPPDA Digital Archive, Flinders University Library Special Collections, MPPDA Record #359, Report, Reel 3, 3-2117 to 3-2126 (accessed July 24, 2017), https://mppda.flinders.edu.au/records/359.

[65] Fredrick Whitin, Letter to Fredrick Herron of the PPDA, April 30, 1928, MPPDA Digital Archive, Flinders University Library Special Collections, MPPDA Record #465, Letter, Reel 5, 5-0590 to 5-0626 (accessed July 24, 2017), https://mppda.flinders.edu.au/records/465.

[66] Members of the governing body hailed from Italy, France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Spain, Japan, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

[67] "The Educational Film Conference at The Hague," *The Educational Screen,* October 1928, 204.

General of the MPPDA, was one of the sixteen individuals who made up the organization's governing body. This ensured that Hays had direct access to all of the IECI's proceedings and could involve the American film industry in any manner he saw fit. On the surface, his eagerness to get involved in the organization seemed to contradict his detachment from the League and his cold denouncement of the Film Congresses in Paris and Berlin, which in theory echoed the mission of the IECI. Though Hays did genuinely appreciate the organization's altruistic ambitions for world peace, he also treated it as a business venture and wanted to ensure that it never became a threat to the interests of the American film industry.

Hays suspected correctly that Mussolini had other motives for the organization than the ones he had outlined at the inauguration ceremony. "It looked pretty much as if the whole idea of the institute was based on Mussolini's ambition to move the European motion picture center from Paris to Rome," Hays later remarked in his memoirs.[68] Mussolini wanted Italian cinema to be the preeminent cinema of Europe. He knew it could not surpass Hollywood, but he did think it could surpass the French film industry. Film played an integral role in his geo-political worldview. Mussolini wanted to eliminate the French presence in the Balkans and North Africa in order to "reclaim" territory he considered fundamentally Italian. This meant he had to loosen France's grip over popular media outlets and rally the public's support.

By situating Rome as the bastion of educational and intellectual film, he reasoned he could strengthen Italy's reputation for cinema and distinguish it from its larger neighbors. Hays had no problem with this since it created new opportunities for American films to enter European theaters. "I took pains to visit the institute," Hays exclaimed, "which was practically in his back yard—and in pleading with him for freer admission of American films emphasized Rome's

[68] Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 424.

historic role as a world center of art."[69] The flattery, coupled with a discussion of the MPPDA's ongoing support of the IECI, was enough to convince Mussolini to ease restrictions on American films entering Italian theaters. In addition, Hays knew the American film industry would profit from the IECI's plan to remove customs duties and fees on films that were deemed educational. Hays' relationship with Mussolini and the IECI seemed to go against his lofty ambition to use American films to spread democracy and peace around the world. In reality, however, Hays' involvement reflected a continuous pattern in American foreign relations. Policymakers and the public were willing both to champion the United States as a tireless advocate for human rights and world peace and at the same time to accommodate dictators when it proved beneficial to the American economy. This demonstrated one of the many paradoxes that came with the Open Door policy.

In his numerous reports to the governing body of the IECI, Hays pondered the implications of film for world peace. He wrestled delicately with the growing tension between the Italian and French film industries and their varying relationships to their respective governments. After insisting that film was "one of the best instruments for the pacification of people," Hays made a rather ominous decree:

> Among modern statesmen Benito Mussolini and Georges Clemenceau have recognized the tremendous propagandistic power of the movie. … State control for the cinema is vigilant, no matter what the policy of the country. … For the masses and their conception of unity, the screen can be the source of the greatest good or the greatest evil. … Only one thing is necessary, that the propaganda be used exclusively for the highest social good.[70]

Hays understood the risks of working with Mussolini and knew that his propaganda did not always serve the highest social good. This was all the more reason, he assumed, to seize the

[69] Ibid.
[70] "The Role of the Cinema in Social Life," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* March 1930, 347.

opportunity to increase the number of American films allowed to screen in Italian theaters. Not only would it benefit the American film industry, but it would also provide the Italian public with more opportunities to view films that implicitly expressed the benefits of the American way of life. After World War II, Hays was more open about his criticism of Mussolini, and he noted bluntly, "partly because of [his] nationalistic bias, the institute achieved little importance as an international force."[71] Statements such as this were common at that time. Like many influential Americans, Hays wanted to distance himself from the horrendous legacy wrought by the Axis powers by downplaying his previously cozy relationship with Mussolini. Though in reality his statement was far from the truth. The IECI, despite its connection with Italian fascism, left an enduring footprint on the Pax Cinemana and made enormous strides in developing film as a means of international understanding. Largely because of its affiliation with Mussolini, the organization has not received the scholarly attention it rightfully deserves.

The governing body of the IECI recognized that its organization had to produce tangible results. It had to be more than a space for exchanging ideas and pleasantries. Naturally, it was a convenient cheerleader for the League and played a role in parroting the League's calls for world peace. According to one League official, the IECI and its films were leading all people "slowly but surely, through the exterior diversities of fashion, of tendencies and of customs proper to each country, to the formation of a kind of Common thought."[72] The IECI propagated such cosmopolitan interpretations of world citizenship frequently and actually followed them up with practical results. Simply discussing the abstract benefits of film was not enough.

[71] Hays, 424.
[72] "The Role and purpose of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* July 1929, 22.

Luciano de Feo, the IECI's primary director and overseer, was quick to implement most of the ideas Luchaire had for the original Film Congress in Paris. He made thousands of contacts with national film archives around the world and made it easier for them to connect and share their holdings with one another. By working diligently with numerous governments, de Feo eliminated or eased administrative fees that came with shipping films across borders. He acquired prints of thousands of educational films from dozens of countries and assembled them in a massive library in Rome. At that time, it was probably the largest collection of educational films in the world. Though the library contained films on various topics, those related to medicine and surgery received the greatest care. By 1930, films had become a standard in medical research facilities and de Feo helped hospitals and universities throughout Europe access one another's works.

In order to ensure that the public was aware of these accomplishments, he created the *International Review of Educational Cinematography*, the official journal of the IECI. Printed on the cover of nearly every issue of the *International Review* was an image of Trajan's Column, a monument built in the second century CE to celebrate the Roman Empire's victory in the Dacian Wars (Fig. 25). The actual Column stood over one hundred feet tall and contained a spiral relief depicting dramatic moments from the wars. "From the artistic and historic view," de Feo wrote, "[the scenes] have a tremendous value and which visualized in rapid succession, give an almost absolutely talkful impression of movement."[73] The Column was a perfect emblem for the IECI because it represented how its nationalist and internationalist objectives functioned in tandem. As was customary with most Roman relics, Mussolini promoted the Column as an enduring national symbol that reflected Italy's glorious history and unmatched military prowess.

[73] "The Role of the Cinema in Social Life," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* March 1930, 379.

Mussolini romanticized the Roman Empire routinely in his speeches and used its history to validate his own military ambitions in North Africa and the Balkans. As a result, he surely appreciated seeing the Column, a tribute to the strength of Rome, re-imagined as a precursor to cinema.

By selecting Trajan's Column as the IECI's emblem, de Feo was doing more than simply appeasing Mussolini's desire to bolster the status of Italian film on the world stage. The Column also contained an implicit cosmopolitan message relevant to the IECI's mission. Rome's victory in the Dacian wars allowed Emperor Trajan to expand Rome's borders to their greatest extent and provide Roman citizenship to millions of new people. A prolonged period of peace and prosperity followed the wars as the Empire became increasingly more diverse and inclusive. De Feo echoed this sentiment when he decided to include an image of the Column on the cover of the IECI's journal. Published once a month in English, Italian, German, Spanish, and French, the *International Review* became an important publication for promoting educational cinema and for articulating precisely what it was and how it would benefit daily society and life.

The IECI framed itself as a shining example of the greater institutionalization of international education throughout the world. Its primary focus of course was to foster world peace via educational film. In the late 1920s, however, there was no consensus as to what that actually meant. In order to distinguish educational films from those of professional entertainment industries, the IECI defined them as non-fiction and non-commercial works. This essentially translated to non-profit documentaries that were made to screen in primarily non-theatrical settings, such as classrooms. The IECI worked with a diverse array of educators from rural public schools to elite universities to incorporate film into pedagogy and measure its effects on students. Every issue of the *International Review* contained updates on how instructors were

using films to enliven their classrooms and connect with students. One of the most pressing issues was the influence of war films on children.

The IECI conducted a number of studies to gauge how depictions of war in films shaped students' attitudes towards it. Many of these studies were joint efforts between the IECI and women's pacifist organizations, such as the International Council of Women (ICW). The ICW was one of the most influential antiwar groups of the twentieth century and had thousands of members from dozens of countries. Its goal was to empower women in all facets of life in order to secure a lasting peace. Many leaders in the ICW, such as Rosika Schwimmer and Jane Addams, were architects of Henry Ford's Peace Ship and heavily involved in the affairs of the League. The ICW created an official Cinema Commission in 1926 to expand its media presence and study media's role in peacekeeping. Laura Dreyfus-Barney was the director of the Commission and worked tirelessly to build productive relationships with the IECI and other League organizations.

Dreyfus-Barney was an American activist best known for her work promoting the Bahá'í Faith, a universal religion that teaches the unity of all people and the benefits of all religions. She was the author of *Some Answered Questions,* one of the seminal works in Bahá'í literature, which detailed her conversations with one of the religion's founders. After the creation of the IECI, she contributed articles regularly to the *International Review* and maintained regular correspondence with de Feo, who praised her as someone "who truly personifies the highest conception of spiritual life."[74] De Feo helped her and the ICW hold regular educational film congresses in Rome to explore the role of women in promoting peace. The sheer volume of stylish war films

[74] "Director's Note," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* December 1931, 1069.

produced between 1914 and 1918 disturbed Dreyfus-Barney, who made them a focal point of these meetings and developed programs to study their psychological impact on students.

Dreyfus-Barney argued that as mothers and teachers, women "were more qualified than anyone else to understand the effects of the film on youth."[75] She was an ardent feminist and usually championed the equality of the sexes, but occasionally felt compelled to highlight what she considered women's exceptional commitment to nonviolence. Her rhetoric resonated not only with progressive liberals in the United States, but also with fascists in Italy, who upheld the cult of motherhood, a belief that society needed strong women to raise strong children and tame the inherent hedonism of men. One of her studies argued that "girls do not like war films," concluding that the films appealed to a uniquely male obsession with guns and bravado.[76] She did not, however, endorse an overarching censorship of war films like some of her colleagues had done. Opting instead for the need to develop an ongoing dialogue with students, particularly male students, she promoted studies that measured how films that detailed the harsh realities of war, such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) and *The Man I Killed* (1932), "naturally lead to a desire that such things should not be repeated and in this way there is a gain for the idea of peace."[77] She also detailed the effectiveness of following up screenings of war films with ones that demonstrated the work of the League and other postwar peacekeeping organizations. *The Star of Hope* (1925) and *The World War and After* (1926) were two such works that generated considerable attention within the ICW and the IECI.

---

[75] Laura Dreyfus-Barney, "What Women Can Offer the Cinema," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* June 1932, 471.
[76] Laura Dreyfus-Barney, "Cinema and Protection of Infancy," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* April 1934, 282.
[77] Laura Dreyfus-Barney, "The Cinema and Peace," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* April 1934, 254.

Created by the League of Nations Union, Britain's largest pacifist organization, these two documentaries detailed the operations of the League in a way that elementary school students could comprehend. The IECI published a series of articles detailing how the films convinced students that "that war is contagious and is horrible" and that "the League is a peacemaker."[78] *Star of Hope* was a thirty-five minute, two-reel film produced entirely by dedicated amateurs with a budget of approximately two hundred dollars. The film was an amalgamation of newsreel footage, still photographs from the Imperial War Museum, and a handful of original maps and diagrams. The film was presented in Geneva to League officials who distributed it to interested parties in Europe, South Asia, and South Africa. The success of the film encouraged the amateur crew to invest in a lengthier sequel, *The World War and After* (1926).

This film contained far more original footage and demonstrated how League operations could make for engaging viewing. Beginning inside a London slum, the story revolved around a group of combative neighbors who gradually build secret coalitions with one another. In an analogy to World War I, each neighbor personified a respective nation. The film's second act detailed the brutality of the war while the third act depicted the rise of the League. By connecting the local with the global, the film showed how negotiation and diplomacy were relevant to daily life. The film was an enormous success and screened in hundreds of schools in multiple countries and even in a handful of theaters. Dreyfus-Barney and the ICW supported the film and praised its entertainment value. Naturally, one of the greatest problems for filmmakers interested in depicting the League was making its activities compelling to watch. "It is intrinsically more difficult," one IECI official wrote, "to show a peace conference dramatically on the screen than a

[78] C.M. Wilson, "The League of Nations on the Screen: Five Years Educational Experiment," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* June 1930, 720.

cavalry charge or to present examples of friendly international cooperation as episodes of box-office value."[79]

Dreyfus-Barney argued that these limitations could be overcome if more women were involved in the filmmaking process. Fresh female perspectives, she figured, were essential to ensuring that films could serve world peace. "I appeal to mothers of families," she declared, "to teachers, to all women in fact who can contribute to a work which will be a great help for happiness in our houses, for social tranquility, and a coming closer together of the people."[80] Her work with the IECI demonstrated how Americans were still integral to League activities despite the fact that the United States was not officially a member. Dreyfus-Barney's efforts helped introduce peace films into thousands of classrooms and raise the prestige of the IECI. However, de Feo did not want to hinder the IECI by limiting its scope only to films that were intended for classroom use.

De Feo did want to advance the role of film in teaching and instruction, but he also wanted to contribute to other areas that he believed were integral to improving international education. Within the IECI's literature, de Feo and others were skilled at promoting their agenda not as a vague idea, but rather as a service for several key facets of society, specifically labor, religion, agriculture, science, and public health. It was within these areas that the IECI leadership focused its energies. Within discussions of world peace, the IECI treated public health and labor as the most paramount. World peace, they assumed, hinged at least in part on film's ability to serve these two areas in a practical manner.

[79] Ibid, 717.
[80] Laura Dreyfus-Barney, "What Women Can Offer the Cinema," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* June 1932, 472.

The *International Review* contained more articles on film's benefit to public health and hygiene than any other topic. Films were an integral part of the global crusade against infectious disease. The IECI's leaders worked regularly with members of the United States Department of Agriculture and the National Institutes of Health to produce films that actually treated disease as a unifying force that would bring distant societies together on account of a common enemy. De Feo suggested routinely how diseases, not people, were the main sources of suffering and death in the world. His attitude was quite common and stemmed from the memory of the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918. The unprecedented mobilization of humans and resources during World War I created new avenues for an aggressive flu virus to spread. Over the course of only two years, it infected approximately 500 million people and claimed the lives of upwards of 50 million. In fact, more people died from the influenza outbreak than the war itself. The globalization of the world, which the IECI insisted was inevitable, would continue to create new opportunities for disease outbreaks.

Over the course of nearly a decade, the IECI spearheaded a number of campaigns to produce and screen films in schools, churches, YMCAs, and other community centers that demonstrated how to minimize the risk of spreading disease. Some films were quite simple and did little more than showcase the value of mosquito nets and hand soap. Others, however, were elaborate productions that explored the origins of rare and deadly viruses. Non-human agents, such as mosquitoes, vermin, and germs, were usually the villains of such works and represented what one anti-malaria film called the true "scourge of mankind."[81] Only by putting aside petty differences could governments wield the resources necessary to eliminate the world's true killers, which, the IECI argued, had no concern for national borders and politics.

[81] "The Cinema in the Campaign against Malaria," *International Review of Educational Cinematography,* May 1930, 619.

The IECI similarly treated exploitative labor conditions as another immediate threat to world peace. The IECI worked closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO), one the League's most influential bodies, to incorporate films into their social justice and workplace safety campaigns. The ILO emerged in 1919 to compensate trade unions and the working class for their critical role in the war effort. Unions and social reformers worked with government officials to ensure that the postwar peace recognized the importance of humane working conditions and sufficient wages. The formation of the organization was outlined in Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles, which states clearly that world peace can be established only if it is based upon the fair and dignified treatment of the world's workers. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, wrote much of the ILO's constitution and bylaws. Though the United States played a key role in establishing the organization, it did not initially become a member since it never joined the League. Nevertheless, a common interest in using films to uphold the Treaty of Versailles' commitment to workers pulled American leaders in government and business into the joint efforts of the ILO and the IECI.

Labor leaders had a keen interest in cinema and participated heavily in the League's first Film Congress in Paris. The ILO's headquarters contained an extensive film library and published an annual catalogue of films relevant to the ongoing needs of labor. Because the organization did not initially have its own official film department, de Feo reached out and offered the services of the IECI. By 1934, it had become the ILO's primary resource for anything film-related and championed its commitment to regulating hours and pay, protecting workers against injury and sickness, preventing unemployment, and eliminating poverty.[82] The IECI expanded the ILO's relationship with the US Department of Commerce and US Department of

[82] Part XIII, The Versailles Treaty, June 28, 1919. Available at: Avalon Project (accessed June 3, 2017).

Labor to develop films that improved workplace safety and efficiency. Many American businesses, such as Ford Motor Company and US Steel, worked with the IECI to publish studies on how they had incorporated film into the workplace. Those related to examining film and scientific management generated the most interest and supported the popular interpretation of world peace as the inevitable result of maximum productivity. These opportunities benefited the companies' public relations and helped market their products and services overseas. It also relieved pressure from the federal government to prove that their facilities met necessary safety standards. Evidently, the IECI had the ability to work effectively with American statesmen and businessmen.

In June 1934, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt recognized that the United States and the ILO already had a symbiotic relationship and were working closely on a variety of labor issues. Roosevelt convinced Congress to accept a resolution that would allow the United States to join the organization without having to become a member of the League of Nations. This seemingly created an endless array of new opportunities for the IECI to work directly with the United States government. The optimism was short lived. One year later, Mussolini mobilized approximately 100,000 troops to invade and conquer the Ethiopian Empire without the consent of the League. Despite pleas from Emperor Haile Selassie for the League to act, the organization did little to prevent Italy's violent incursion into Africa. The event marked the beginning of the end for the IECI and the League itself.

The invasion drove a wedge between the members of the IECI's governing body as many found it increasingly difficult to collaborate with a government clearly preparing for war. De Feo began politicizing the IECI's literature and made his Italian patriotism known. After learning of the use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia, the League publically condemned Mussolini and

imposed a number of economic sanctions on Italy. Mussolini refused to abandon his African campaign and officially withdrew Italy from the League on December 11, 1937. The decision forced all operations of the IECI to cease immediately. Standing before approximately 100,000 people and dozens of film cameras in Rome, Mussolini framed himself and Italy as victims of the tyrannical ambitions of the League. "We shall not forget," he declared passionately, "the shameful attempt at the strangulation of the Italian people that was perpetrated at Geneva … and leave without regret, the tottering temple in which men do not work for peace, but prepare for war."[83] Given the context, his words were painfully ironic and demonstrated how easy it had become for dictators to vilify the League in order mask their own shortcomings.

The League was never a singular body but rather a vast network of semi-autonomous parts all operating under the broad parameters of the Covenant. It was a complex bureaucracy designed to maintain a dialogue between member states in order to avoid acts of war. It was not a world government or a world police. Unfortunately, by 1937, the League had not done enough to validate that it was solving the troubles of the Great Depression. Many people questioned its worth and turned to economic nationalists promising unprecedented prosperity. The League had become such a massive entity that many of its appendages were embedded deeply within the daily workings of national institutions. Fascist dictators recognized this and used the League as a scapegoat. Despite his earlier commitment to the League and its mission, Mussolini began portraying it as a power-hungry puppet master trying to manipulate sovereign governments. What did diplomats in Geneva, Mussolini suggested, know of Italy's true greatness? As Italy drifted closer to an alliance with Nazi Germany, long-standing critics of the League in the United States seized the chance to flaunt its ineffectiveness. For many congressmen who had repeatedly

[83] "Italy Leaves League," *The Courier-Mail*, December 13, 1937, 13.

questioned the League's priorities, such as its commitment to building international education rather than an international military, it was an unabashed "I told you so" moment. However, all of these criticisms failed to address the fact that many of the League's organizations, like the IECI, had produced tangible results, despite their ambivalent relationship with the United States.

Chapter Six

Leave Peace to the Amateurs: Hiram Percy Maxim and the Amateur Cinema League

After World War I, amateur cinema thrived as an international avocation due to the invention of various small-gauge film cameras, particularly Eastman Kodak's 16mm model. The 16mm camera was a fraction of the price of a professional 35mm camera and was easily transportable, making the individual production of film relatively egalitarian for the first time since the birth of the cinema. By the close of the 1920s, tens of thousands of amateur filmmakers around the world, particularly in the United States, Europe, Australasia, East Asia, and Russia, had organized themselves within film clubs, societies, and organizations. These amateur institutions varied in size and often had conflicting interests and activities. However, they represented a new discursive and collaborative arena that thrived outside the hegemony of states and professional film industries. This chapter moves beyond the parameters of government and Hollywood in order to explore the relationship between amateur filmmakers and the Pax Cinemana.

Organized amateur filmmaking in many respects embodied the democratization of cinema. The miracle of motion pictures had finally come into the hands of ordinary citizens. Many amateur filmmakers embraced this notion and insisted that their work could serve as convenient means of person-to-person, citizen diplomacy. The act of watching foreign peoples' everyday habits and encounters, they believed, would concurrently humanize them for the viewer; thus, notions of their "otherness" would dissolve. One dedicated amateur filmmaker elaborated on this in an article titled "Can we hate?" Tracing a correlation between empathy and amateur films, the author stated plainly, "movie makers are special messengers of civilization,

because we report the every day facts of one part of the world to another. We are not hunting sensations for newsreels. We are picturing the nations of the earth as they are."[1]

By and large, amateur films and filmmakers have received little scholarly attention. The scholarly neglect of amateur cinema stems mainly from the fact that it has long carried the inappropriate and unfitting stigma of a "home movie." However, the term home movie does not adequately reflect the work and ambitions of the subjects considered in this chapter. The aim of this chapter is not to dissect casual records of family and domestic life created by those with little to no concern for production value or narrative craft. The subjects of this chapter represented a culture of organized amateur filmmakers who mastered the technical aspects of cinematography and wanted to participate in a "little" cinema that existed beyond the demands of states and professional entertainment industries. Many amateurs ultimately hoped to merge the production value of professional cinema with the intimacy of ethnography. "Here, there, and everywhere," one amateur exclaimed confidently in 1926, "sixteen thousand amateurs are creating their own Hollywoods, Hollywoods of real people."[2]

In terms of technology, most amateurs distinguished amateur films from those of Hollywood or entertainment industries because they were created with small-gauge film formats (16mm, 8mm, 9.5mm), whereas professionals primarily used large-gauge formats (35mm, 70mm). However, the distinction between amateur and professional had less to do with equipment and more to do with intent. For many amateurs, Hollywood represented a vertically integrated industry with a distinct division of labor. Hollywood and industry professionals embodied a world of rampant consumerism and marketing. Amateur filmmakers often aligned the production mode of Hollywood with that of an assembly line in one of Ford's factories.

[1] Roy W. Winton, Editorial, "Can we hate?" *Movie Makers*, November 1938, 532
[2] "Who STARTED the Fun?" *Movie Makers*, December 1926, 9.

Films were products or consumer items more than works of creative expression and peacekeeping.[3] Hollywood's ultimate goal was to maximize profits and in order to do so the studio system needed to produce films that appealed to mass interests.

In many respects, amateur cinema represented a cinema free from commercial, political, and financial restraints. The commercial interests that ran against *Ravished Armenia*'s humanitarian push for international law, as well as the political bickering that plagued the League of Nations' film pursuits, had no bearing on amateurs and their work. For most amateurs, a sense of independence, rather than expensive equipment, separated the professional from the amateur. Many amateur film organizations associated the notion of amateur with "practicality," "passion," "authenticity," "genuineness," and "total liberty."[4] These filmmakers embraced small-gauge or "home movie" film formats, but were not content keeping their work within the domestic sphere. Many wanted their films to *move* both within and across borders, encouraging the international production, exhibition, and discussion of films in an earnest endeavor to promote world peace. In order to understand the role of amateur filmmaking in the pursuit of an enduring peace, it is useful to explore the influence of the "Auerbach Incident" on Hiram Percy Maxim, the amateur filmmaking's most outspoken activist.

…….

In the early 1900s, noise pollution plagued America's urban centers. With technological advancement came the boisterous sounds of automobiles, trains, engines, and factories. New York, teeming with disparate sounds of crowds and machinery, was void of any legislation to regulate what one resident described as "a pandemonium of rumbling trucks, shrieking brakes,

[3] "Warning about Censorship and the Hudson Bill," *Movie Makers,* February 1929, 77.
[4] Roy W. Winton, "The Amateur Cinema Camera Man," *Amateur Movie Makers*, March 1927, 28.

and roaring drills." "On reading this cacophonous list," the commentator continued, "I am struck with its resemblance to what might pass for a symphony in the modern manner portraying civilization as a monster, a destroying Frankenstein."[5] In short, modern life was noisy and the federal government did not recognize the health and environmental concerns of noise emissions until the late 1960s, and only in 1972 did Congress implement the Noise Pollution and Abatement Act to reshape the urban soundscape. For decades beforehand, New Yorkers and other urban dwellers managed to cope with the burden as entrepreneurs invented, patented, and sold various noise suppressing products.

On Thursday, January 28,1915, Herman Auerbach acquired a curious, new device from one of the world's leading manufacturers of noise reduction technology: the Maxim Silencer Company. The company designed the Maxim silencer to suppress the sound blast of firearms between .22 and .44 calibers. The inventor of the instrument patented it in 1908 and perfected it in 1909. The United States military simultaneously used and tested the product as it entered the marketplace. Auerbach likely purchased the Maxim silencer from a local hardware store in Manhattan, where it sold for between $3.25 and $5.00. He quickly fastened it to the barrel of a .44 Winchester repeating rifle loaded with steel jacket bullets designed for big-game hunting. He then proceeded home to his apartment on Central Park West, where his wife greeted him. She asked about the rifle and the peculiar metal cylinder attached to it. Auerbach explained that he was in the process of acquiring investors for a company to manufacture rifles equipped with Maxim silencers, a likely explanation given the growing reputation of the Maxim brand. The Maxim Silencer Company specialized not only in firearm silencers but also in noise suppressors for engines, exhaust pipes, ventilating systems, air conditioning units, and an array of industrial

[5] Shirley W. Wyne, "Noises that Assail the New York Ear," *The New York Times,* November 3, 1929, SM2.

machinery. Auerbach placed the modified Winchester out of sight in his home and nothing came of it again for several days.

Auerbach was seemingly a happy and healthy individual. He had three children and owned Auerbach Realty Company, a real estate business catering to well-to-do Manhattanites. His father was the director of the business and his wife was the secretary. His father, David Auerbach, had emigrated from Germany and owned and operated a profitable candy factory in New York, which had provided Herman Auerbach and his siblings with a secure and reasonably affluent upbringing. On Saturday, January 30, 1915, Auerbach, as he had countless times in the past, went for a long walk to Union Square. There, he met with relative David Levy and proceeded uptown. According to Levy, there was no indication that anything was out of the ordinary. Auerbach then took the trolley back to Central Park West and returned home around 7:00 p.m. "When he arrived," reported *The New York Times*, "he gave each of his children a quarter and told them to go to a moving picture show."[6]

The cinema captivated Auerbach's children, like it did most Americans. In 1915, every week, over thirty million Americans flocked to one of America's 21,000 movie theaters. In the 1910s, new theaters designed for middle and upper-class Americans had sprouted up throughout Manhattan. Hailed as "dream palaces" given their ostentatious designs, these cinemas enchanted the well-to-do far more than the ramshackle, turn-of-the-century movie houses and nickelodeons that catered to the working class.[7] The Auerbach children, Beatrice, 18, Daisy, 16, and Lester, 14, probably saw one of the month's most popular films: *The Birth of a Nation, Les Vampires*, *Regeneration, The Cheat,* or *Alice in Wonderland.* As they watched the film it is unlikely that

[6] "Silent Gun Kills a Family of Four," *The New York Times,* February 1, 1915, 3.
[7] "History of the Motion Picture," *Encyclopedia Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica Online.* Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web (accessed July 16, 2012).

they mulled over the world war and its crippling effects on nearly every film industry outside Southern California.

After the screening, the Auerbachs returned home, around 10:30 p.m., and they spoke briefly with their stepmother, Clair Auerbach, 34, who had just returned from spending the evening at her brother's. Noticing that their father was already asleep, they too proceeded to go to bed. Beatrice and Daisy made their way to their respective twin beds in the room they shared. Lester proceeded to his room while Clair joined her husband, careful not to wake him. Eventually, the Auerbachs drifted off to sleep.

The exact time of their murders remains a mystery. Yet at some point in the night, Herman Auerbach awoke, grabbed the Winchester repeating rifle equipped with the Maxim silencer, and entered his daughters' room. He stood between the two girls as they slept and fired one round each into the backs of their heads. He then returned to his room and did the same to his sleeping wife before turning the gun on himself.[8]

Around 9:00 a.m. the following morning, Herman Auerbach's nephew called to inquire if Beatrice would like to go skating. Lattie Schliep, a maid employed by Herman Auerbach, answered the telephone, a fairly new means of communication in the apartment complex, and responded that the family had yet to awake. The nephew in turn asked for Lester, and the maid agreed to wake him. Lester acknowledged his cousin's invitation and asked him to call back in a few hours. As time passed, Lester decided to awaken his sister and give her the message. According to *The New York Times*, "He walked down the corridor, knocked at the door, and receiving no response, opened the door and looked in. The two girls lay motionless, with their pillows stained crimson."[9] Lester was shocked but managed to keep his composure. He turned to

[8] "Kills Three; Uses Maxim Silencer to let Son Sleep," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* February 1, 1915, 1.
[9] "Silent Gun Kills a Family of Four," *The New York Times,* February 1, 1915, 1.

his father's room and frantically pounded on the door. After getting no response, he opened the door to find his father and stepmother dead, with large bullet wounds in their heads. He noticed the Winchester repeating rifle and the unusual cylinder attached to the barrel. Lester immediately informed the maid who notified the authorities. As he passed the doorway of his own room he found a note in his father's handwriting. "When you wake up," it read, "telephone to Uncle Joe and Leo and grandpa."[10] The boy followed his deceased father's instructions and contacted the only family he had left.

After questioning Herman Auerbach's close friends and relatives, the police concluded that recent business failings and a series of losses in real estate holdings drove Auerbach into a deep depression with catastrophic consequences. Literally overnight, the Auerbach tragedy brought the Maxim Silencer Company national attention and triggered public debate. "Four killings in a few minutes," one reporter for *The Pittsburgh Press* noted, "and not a sound to warn either those outside or in the apartment itself! The presumption seems fairly to be, therefore, that it was the silencer and the silencer alone that enabled Auerbach to accomplish his purpose."[11] Journalists wrote extensively about the certainty that such a crime would reoccur and about the infinite potential the silencer created for new criminal activity. Furthermore, after the shootings, a wave of crime novels, detective stories, and pulp fiction comics emerged, featuring the Maxim silencer as an indispensable plot device. After the invention of sound films, Hollywood also embraced the Maxim silencer in a vast array of crime, gangster, and film noir pictures, which romanticized murder and urban violence.

Since its invention, the Maxim silencer has been embroiled in controversy. However, it never received much public attention until the Auerbach tragedy. Various news outlets lambasted

[10] "Silent Gun Kills a Family of Four," *The New York Times,* February 1, 1915, 3.
[11] "Gun Silencer Promotes Crime," *The Pittsburg Press,* February 3, 1915, 8.

the "disastrous," "sinister," and "deadly" instrument and called for state and federal legislation to prohibit further manufacture and sale of the device.[12] One journalist claimed the Maxim Company's president "did humanity no service when he invented this devilish tool."[13] For over a decade, the Maxim silencer continued to make headlines as critics claimed it boosted theft, sustained organized crime syndicates, and encouraged murder. In 1926, when reflecting on the alleged ubiquity of silencers, *The New York Times* asked, "Why even one was ever publicly sold? Is there any conceivable use, except criminal concealment and the facilitation of murder, to which such a device can be put outside of the battlefield?"[14] The Auerbach incident reignited the seemingly never-ending debate regarding gun control in the United States, but this debate also embroiled the inventor of the silencer in this critical discourse on crime and technology. Many media outlets, including *The Pittsburgh Press, The New York Times,* and *The Detroit Free Press*, insisted that the inventor of the silencer was indirectly responsible for the death of the Auerbach family. The man whose invention "caused" such criminality was Hiram Percy Maxim.

Hiram Percy Maxim was born in New York City and raised in New England during the last half of the nineteenth century. In 1884, at fourteen years of age, Maxim began studying engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Two years later, Maxim graduated not only as the youngest in his class but also as the youngest at MIT. This perhaps came as no surprise given that Maxim stemmed from a long line of influential independent inventors.[15]

---

[12] See "Gun Silencer Promotes Crime," *The Pittsburgh Press,* February 3, 1915, 8; "Machine Guns and Gas are Easy to Purchase," *The New York Times,* November 21, 1926, 12; "Another Handicap for the Police," *The Detroit Free Press*, April 14, 1911, 4; "Bars Maxim Silent Gun," *The New York Times,* March 8, 1909, 1.
[13] "Gun Silencer Promotes Crime," *The Pittsburg Press,* February 3, 1915, 8.
[14] "Machine Guns and Gas are Easy to Purchase," *The New York Times,* November 21, 1926, 12.
[15] In 1892, Maxim envisioned a rapidly approaching world where self-propelled vehicles reconfigured the structure of society. Maxim, like several other independent inventors of his era, foresaw the potential of the "horseless

Hiram Stevens Maxim, his father, invented the Maxim gun, the world's first practical, self-powered machine gun. The Maxim machine gun revolutionized modern warfare and evolved into a symbol of European imperialism. The adoption of the Maxim gun in World War I resulted in the deaths of millions. Variations of the weapon were ubiquitous throughout the trenches as belligerents from each side volleyed waves of bullets back and forth for months, leading to many instances of deadly stalemate. Historians credit much of the staggering death tolls at Verdun and Somme, for example, to the use of the machine gun. After the war, several camera companies actually appropriated Maxim's design and created the camera machine-gun, a camera that operated precisely like a machine gun in order to train troops for aerial and ground combat.[16] The camera machine-gun was yet another testament to the unlikely marriage between the motion picture industry and munitions manufacturers. Similarly, Maxim's uncle, Hudson Maxim, a talented chemist, has been credited with inventing smokeless gunpowder and an array of explosives used extensively throughout the war. He was also an avid writer and provided the inspiration and story for *The Battle Cry of Peace* (1915), the infamous Hollywood propaganda film that Henry Ford had publicly condemned and later challenged in his own educational film series. The war blurred what were once seemingly self-evident lines between combat, peace, and cinema.

Historians often link World War I and a new and deadly stock of weapons, which forced millions of people, mostly Europeans, to recognize that modern technology was both a means to a plausible utopia and a catalyst for catastrophe. Fortunately for the United States, Americans had represented only a small fraction of the war's casualties. By and large, the trauma of the war

---

carriage." From 1892 to 1906, Maxim devoted himself tirelessly to the advance of automotive technology and played an integral role in the emergence of the modern car.

[16] A.M. Pendleton, "Shooting with Movie Film," *Flying Magazine,* July 1934, 16.

had worn much heavier on Europe than the United States. As a result, the war's violence was not enough to completely overturn Americans' faith in technological innovation.[17] Seemingly, Maxim's silencer fit nicely within a larger family genealogy of successful war devices. However, unlike his father and uncle, Hiram Percy Maxim had virtually no interest in producing guns and heavy artillery.

Hiram Stevens Maxim spent endless hours experimenting with various parts of his Maxim gun and consequently raised his son in a home filled with noise. As a child, Hiram Percy Maxim became accustomed to the sounds of explosions and gunfire, forcing him to recognize the damaging physical and psychological effects of unwarranted noise. As an adult, Maxim published several articles demonstrating the negative health consequences of noise pollution. Maxim perceived noise as one of the principal hurdles of modern life and in reference to his company exclaimed, "we believe we have spent more money and more effort in the study of noise reduction than anyone else in the world."[18]

Soon after the invention of the automobile muffler, Maxim thought to apply the device to other instruments. Originally, he had two specific intentions for his silencer: military use and recreational use. Ideally, the silencer would aid the instruction of new recruits by reducing the physical strain stemming from recoil and provide tactical advantages since enemies could not detect locations from blast noise or muzzle flash.[19] Moreover, gun enthusiasts with backyard ranges could employ the silencer and no longer disturb their neighbors. Advertisements for the silencer did not reflect any form of clandestine, illicit activity, insisting primarily that "girls like

[17] Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1900* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 78.
[18] See Schumacher, 51. "The Loud Speaker," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* 8 Jan. 1930, 14. "Maxim to Quiet Noises of Cities," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* October 6, 1913, 8.
[19] Schumacher, 52.

it when there's no nerve-ripping report."[20] Though the silencer sold fairly well as a leisure product, it never became as ubiquitous within the United States military as Maxim had predicted, despite having sold 1,100 silencers to the United States army in 1910.[21] The enormous and explicit nature of World War I demonstrated clearly that modern militaries had little need for personal stealth equipment. War in the twentieth century was destined to be big, loud, and messy—a deadly spectacle to be played out in front of a camera lens.

Ironically, for a man critiqued by the press as a co-conspirator in crimes such as "silenced" theft and murder, Hiram Percy Maxim was widely recognized for his nonviolent character. Maxim committed himself to his family and had no run-ins with the law; his colleagues frequently described him as "a man of peace."[22] Maxim considered himself diplomatic by nature, and his business associates revered his conflict-resolution skills. Unlike his uncle and father, who were slightly crass and outspoken, Maxim was tactful, calculating, and patient. His characteristic calmness and approachability in business and finance earned him recognition as "the beloved gentleman," a title that followed him until death.[23] According to Maxim, he encouraged his favorite avocation, filmmaking, because he thought it could usher in an era of global peace and understanding.

Maxim never intended to aid organized crime or mass murder with his invention of the silencer. He wanted to eliminate unnecessary noise, whatever its source. A device built to ameliorate the noisy, frustrating facets of modernity in actuality fueled urban violence, one of its most heinous consequences. Apparently as a result, Maxim decided to cease the sale and

[20] "Train to be a Marksman," advertisement for the Maxim Silencer Company, 1910.
[21] "Trying Maxim Silencers," *The New York Times*, September 2, 1910, 6.
[22] Arthur L. Gale, "Hiram Percy Maxim, *Movie Makers*, March 1936, 107.
[23] Arthur L. Gale, "Hiram Percy Maxim, *Movie Makers*, March 1936, 108.

manufacture of his silencers in 1930.[24] "We stopped," Maxim stated, "before crime and street shootings became so frequent."[25] For years afterward, Maxim continued to adapt his silencer apparatus to hospital rooms, automobiles, diesel engines, boat engines, steam engines, and an array of industrial machinery. Despite his quest for silence, Maxim's greatest passion rested in tools of communication.

In 1921, Maxim purchased an Eastman Kodak 16mm motion picture camera. He loved the device and it quickly became one of his most prized possessions. He committed himself to mastering the mechanical and technical aspects of the camera and eventually matured into a skilled cinematographer. He even began shooting his own photoplays with the aid of his family and friends, an unusual activity for a man of his affluence. Enamored with the possibilities of the small-gauge film camera, Maxim championed it as a revolutionary piece of technology with potential that surpassed radio and telephones for its ability to allow ordinary individuals to communicate, albeit visually in this case. Maxim predicted that by 1925, there would be over ten thousand amateur film enthusiasts who would benefit from collective learning. Maxim saw fit to create an association that would link amateur filmmakers across local and national borders.

On July 28, 1926, Maxim held a luncheon at the New York Hotel Biltmore in Manhattan to establish formally and celebrate the birth of the Amateur Cinema League, or the ACL. At the meeting, Maxim announced the directors of the league, explained the goals and structure of the organization, and read salutations from John H. Trumbull, the governor of Connecticut, Amelita Galli-Curci, the famous Italian singer, and George Ade, the world-renowned playwright. It was truly a bourgeois affair. Participating parties selected Maxim as the first ACL president and several prominent businessmen as directors, such as Roy D. Chapman of the Hudson Motor

[24] "Maxim Bans Gun Silencer," *The New York Times,* May 8, 1930, 27.
[25] Alice Clink Schumacher, *Hiram Percy Maxim* (Cortez, CO: Electric Radio Press, 1998), 63.

Company, C.R. Dooley of Standard Oil, and W.E. Cotter of Union Carbide.[26] Unmistakably, the leadership of the ACL reflected the larger pro-business, anti-statist culture that thrived throughout the 1920s. Maxim, like most of his directors, was a proud Republican and only had to look to his family's experience during the war to understand that governments had misused the power of motion pictures. Maxim believed earnestly that motion pictures belonged first and foremost in the hands of "ordinary" citizens. Though the ACL leadership was particularly wealthy, they insisted that the goal was to create a mainstream institution designed for the interests of the middle class, or "everyday people" as Maxim phrased it.

Within the bourgeoning culture of organized amateur filmmaking, the ACL was responsible for the medium's most ambitious activity. Maxim knew the deadly consequences of technological innovation all too well and founded the ACL specifically as a community of interest designated to promoting peace and international understanding after the turmoil of the war. The ACL quickly grew into the world's largest and most globally active amateur cinema organization with over 10,000 official members scattered between sixty countries. The ACL registered over two hundred and fifty regional clubs and its service department, which managed communication between the ACL and its members, made tens of thousands of contacts per year. The monthly readers of *Movie Makers,* the ACL's official journal, had reached 100,000 by the mid 1930s. Boasting that its members were everywhere, from "Tampa to Timbuktu," the ACL was unmatched in its international scope.[27] The ACL, from its beginnings, was a vehicle to promote cross-cultural interaction, understanding, and dialogue. The ACL was not the only organization dedicated to popularizing amateur cinema but it was the only organization that

[26] The other ACL directors included Stephen F. Voorhes, a celebrated architect, and Colonel Roy W. Winton, formerly of the United States Army.
[27] Editorial, *Movie Makers,* January 1931, 7.

strongly supported transnational dialogue and international cooperation among its members. It was by no means representative of the entire culture of organized amateur cinema, but did help unite many of the world's most influential and popular amateur filmmaking bodies under the lofty promise of world peace.

Officially, the central purpose of the ACL was to advance the "sport" of amateur filmmaking by encouraging the production of amateur films, the formation of local amateur film clubs, the national and international exchange of amateur films, and fraternalism between amateur filmmakers. Maxim, though, had far greater ambitions for the new activity than were represented in the stated goals and services:

> Amateur cinematography has a future that the most imaginative of us would be totally incapable of estimating. When we analyze amateur cinematography we find it a very much broader affair than appears upon the surface. Instead of its being a form of light amusement, it is really an entirely new method of communication. Our civilization offers us today, only the spoken word or the written word, as a means of communicating with each other. This word may be spoken to those within sound of our voice, telephoned over a hired wire, mailed in a letter or telegraphed in dots and dashes. But no matter how transmitted it is still the spoken or written word. We are dumb as far as movement, action, grace, beauty, and all that depends on these things. The motion picture communicates all of these. We are able to transmit what our eyes see, and it is the next thing to actually being present ourselves. And so instead of amateur cinematography being merely a means of individual amusement, we have in it a means of communicating a new form of knowledge to our fellow human beings, be where they may upon the earth's surface.[28]

Evidently, Maxim viewed the small-gauge film camera as the next great step in the evolution of communication systems, which included written letters, telegrams, and telephones. Therefore, Maxim considered the emergence of the 16mm camera not as the birth of a new toy, as many Hollywood professionals contended, but as a landmark moment in human interaction. For

[28] Hiram Percy Maxim, "Amateur Cinema League: A Close-Up," *Amateur Movie Makers*, December 1926, 7.

Maxim, amateur cinema was as much about the diffusion of knowledge as it was about personal recreation and leisure. In 1929, Roy Winton, ACL Managing Director, expanded on Maxim's thoughts by comparing the potential impact of small-gauge film cameras to the influence of the printing press on "the molding of public opinion."[29]

Maxim and the directors of the ACL, like many technological enthusiasts in the twentieth century, embraced a utopian image of technology and frequently described their activity as humanitarian and of the utmost importance: "It may not be too much to say that the organizing of amateur cinematography marks one of the greatest advancements in general human education that has been made in modern times."[30] For the ACL, amateur cinema was not only advancing technology but also "bringing men and women generally to a better knowledge of each other." [31] For Maxim, amateur cinema was "not merely a means for individual amusement," but was also a powerful tool for intercommunication. "An amateur cinematographer in the tropics," Maxim boasted, "may convey to an amateur in a cold country precisely what life in the tropics is." For Maxim, this was impossible with any other form of existing technology because such sources "provided only the spoken word or the written word." With motion pictures, Maxim exclaimed, "Interesting customs in one country which are indescribable in words may be made known to peoples of other countries."[32] The directors of the ACL were proud of their multinational breadth and boasted that amateur cinema was "an international language, and a bond between nations."[33]

Maxim and many of the ACL leaders were idealists and operated under the assumption that universal principles bind all people regardless of nationality, race, class, gender, and

[29] "The Press Turns to the Film: A Great Newspaper Finds Amateur Movies a Business Asset," *Movie Makers,* February 1929, 84.
[30] Hiram Percy Maxim, "Amateur Cinema League: A Close-Up," *Amateur Movie Makers*, December 1926, 7.
[31] Hiram Percy Maxim, "Amateur Cinema League: A Close-Up," *Amateur Movie Makers*, December 1926, 7.
[32] Hiram Percy Maxim, "Amateur Cinema League: A Close-Up," *Amateur Movie Makers*, December 1926, 7.
[33] "Through a Wide Angle Lens," *Amateur Movie Makers,* February 1927, 30.

political affiliation. Maxim and the ACL leaders believed that the efficient exchange of amateur cinema would help minimize conflicts between distant peoples. Maxim hoped to cultivate an international spirit because he was certain that modern transportation and communication systems would very soon bring all of humanity together into a cohesive whole. "The races of the world," he argued, "are interbreeding for the first time … soon complete infusion will have occurred, and there will be an absence of sharply defined races."[34] Though Maxim and the ACL leadership were idealists, they insisted that American democracy would naturally shape the political landscape of the postwar era.

Maxim often echoed an earlier speech that Woodrow Wilson had made to the United States Congress. If the world's "free peoples" did not unite, Wilson averred, then "there can be no assured security for the democratic governments of the world" or for "ultimate peace."[35] Maxim and the directors of the ACL hoped that the exchange of amateur cinema between democratic nations would help strengthen democratic institutions therein. In addition, they hoped that the exchange of amateur cinema between democratic nations and non-democratic nations would gradually persuade the latter to conform to democracy. Contemporary, liberal idealists see cultural pluralism as the key to the common good and would certainly disparage the ACL's agenda. However, it would be ahistorical to criticize the directors of the ACL for not adhering to current standards of tolerance and liberalism. Given the conditions of the era, it would be misleading to consider the ACL leadership anything but progressive. "Amateur movies can never be predominantly nationalistic," one league director wrote, "they must always trend towards

[34] Hiram Percy Maxim, *Life's Place in the Cosmos* (New York City: D. Appleton and Company, 1933), 168.
[35] Woodrow Wilson, "Address to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War against Germany," April 2, 1917. Available at: Millercenter.org (accessed November 4, 2016).

internationalism and must progress toward that tolerance and that understanding of other peoples and of other viewpoints which mark the true citizens of the world."[36]

Perhaps the ACL leaders were naive, but their attempts to cultivate such notions of internationalism were certainly not disingenuous. In order to achieve their global vision, ACL leaders had made available to their members several international services. In the first issue of *Movie Makers*, Maxim and the directors of the league wrote extensively about their commitment to encouraging and connecting with amateur film activity overseas. According to the ACL constitution, "Any person interested in amateur motion pictures shall be eligible for membership."[37] Therefore, besides an interest in amateur cinematography, nothing prohibits *any* individual from applying, "be where they may," said Maxim, "upon the Earth's surface."[38] The ACL further positioned the organization within a global context by adopting the slogan, "The World-Wide Organization of Amateur Movie Makers."

By 1929, the slogan was printed regularly in the journal and also appeared on every film leader provided to members. A film leader is a short strip of film attached to the start of a reel to simplify the process of threading a projector. The leaders ran before the opening credits and provided members an opportunity to show off their adherence to the ACL. They depicted an animated image of Earth spinning in the vastness of space as the title "Member-Amateur Cinema League-The World-Wide Organization of Amateur Movie Makers" faded in. The decision to use an image of the planet as a league symbol may appear somewhat clichéd. But, in the late 1920s, the image of a fragile planet floating in cosmic emptiness cemented the idea that all humans were destined to share a single celestial body. As a result, the image of the planet implied a sense of

[36] Editorial, *Movie Makers,* June 1931, 309.
[37] "Rules of the Game: Official Constitution and By-Laws of the Amateur Cinema League," *Amateur Movie Makers,* December 1926, 33.
[38] Hiram Percy Maxim, "Amateur Cinema League: A Close-Up," *Amateur Movie Makers*, December 1926, 7.

interconnectedness, fraternity, and communion among members, a central aim of the league. Therefore, the decision was an effective if obvious means to express the international scope of the ACL.

The ACL's worldview was internationalist in the truest sense of the word. Maxim and his cohorts interpreted the world as a single whole comprised of cohesive nation states. Many ACL publications reduced humanity's complexity to "one world" or a "single community." This cosmopolitan impulse permeated most amateur film publications and posed a philosophical challenge to the legitimacy of national citizenship. However, it also undermined the nuances of human communities and ignored those without a state or formal international recognition. For example, an invitation for membership in the ACL stated, "Are YOU on the Amateur Cinema League Map? The League has invaded 31 countries on this map. Have you invaded the League?"[39] The ACL's map served as an inventory of the nations "represented" by its membership. When an individual from Ceylon joined the league, which only a handful ever did, the ACL leadership, using the language of colonialism, checked Ceylon off its list of countries the organization had "invaded." The ACL positioned those few Ceylonese members as stand-ins for the nation's entire population, and the leadership boasted that Ceylon was now part of the global village of amateur filmmakers. In turn, this encouraged many amateurs to produce and exchange films that expressed what they viewed as uniquely "Japanese," "American," or "Austrian," which helped enforce national identities. However, the league directors regularly warned of the dangers of extreme nationalism and claimed they were dedicated to keeping *Movie Makers* free from such sentiment.

[39] "Are YOU on the Amateur Cinema League Map?," *Movie Makers*, November 1927, 48.

Maxim elaborated on his aspiration to imbue members with a sense of international camaraderie in a number of editorials. He provided an overview of the ACL's general philosophy and commitment to divergent nations and peoples. He stressed the importance for members to avoid "drum beating and flag waving."[40] Even though the ACL headquarters resided in New York City, the directors of the league frequently denounced the idea that the organization was a national body of the United States. "The ACL," a 1934 editorial declared, "has been no more Japanese than French, no more American than British, not interested in a Western point of view as opposed to an Eastern, or a Northern as superior to a Southern." The editorial was neither interested in international theory nor "pointing out an object lesson to diplomats." Even though the ACL was not officially a body of the United States, it was certainly a product of the United States, and traces of its national origin permeated all of ACL discourse. But, the directors of the league celebrated international service before formal international politics, whose "formula seems to demand an agreement upon a concept, an abstraction, before anything practical may be attempted."[41] The ACL always championed pragmatism before anything else. ACL leaders focused on the technique of international service because, for them, it was forthright and immediately operative, unlike lofty economic or political theories.

The ACL leadership embraced the tenets of idealism but figured that international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), like the ACL, were better equipped than the federal government to open initially the path toward international understanding on the world stage. INGOs, the leaders argued, offered a simple, practical service, which contributed to an international community *before* any direct intervention from national governments. In other words, according to the ACL, governments should consider trailing INGOs rather than leading

[40] Editorial, *Movie Makers*, July 1929, 437.
[41] Editorial, "Service does it," *Movie Makers*, October 1934, 407.

them because they offered immediate results without the confusion of complicated politics. These assertions were in sync the policies of the Republican establishment at that time. One conservative ACL member from Massachusett, elaborated on this point by promoting the ACL's independent system of international service as being more effective than the League of Nations: "If those chaps across the water were dyed in the wool of movie fans there wouldn't be any war."[42] The ACL was an open reservoir of cinematic information and, as the directors of the league frequently repeated, an INGO based upon mutual exchange and fair bargaining.

Maxim envisioned an amateur consciousness free from financial concerns helping to tear down popular ethnic misconceptions because members from all over the world were engaged solely in a fraternal system of exchange, collaboration, and critique. In the early years of the ACL, the system manifested itself in several forms. First, the ACL provided personalized, yellow cards to all members. The cards were a playful way to express loyalty and foster a sense of fraternity between members. The ACL encouraged and provided information for members and local film clubs from different areas to meet and assemble. "Close Up" and "Amateur Clubs," two articles that appeared in nearly every issue of *Movie Makers,* consisted largely of news concerning cooperation between divergent cine clubs or instances of members meeting. In the beginning years, connections between clubs and members were limited to nearby cities and states. Originally, most clubs were concentrated in the New England and New York areas, thus, most early instances of assembly revolved around the East Coast region. In Canada, members of the Toronto Amateur Movie Club frequently traveled to New York as guests of the Buffalo Cinema Club. At every meeting, Canada's national anthem was blared to welcome the visiting Canadians.[43] In September 1934, officers of the Hungarian Amateur Film Club, ACL, in

[42] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, October 1941, 442.
[43] James W. Moore, "Amateur Clubs: Toronto Travels," *Movie Makers*, August 1936, 343 and 363.

Budapest, Hungary, hosted for five days Jaspar More, ACL, and his fiancée, both of Glasgow, Scotland. In a letter to league headquarters, More stated: "If all movie making clubs were as wiling to help and such good fellows generally, many more people would make movies—if only for the sake of being in the club."[44] Encounters across boundaries and borders were common, and members of cine clubs in Denmark, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, France, South Africa, and England regularly treated foreign ACL members as guests. However, cine clubs did not conduct all transnational meetings. Many individuals expressed their desire to meet other members, and *Movie Makers* published offers of hospitality.

In 1934, A.D. Frischmann, an ACL member in London, England, planned to visit Switzerland and wrote ACL headquarters asking if there were any members in Lugano interested in meeting. The league sent him the contact information for Harry Schraemli, a Swiss ACL member and owner of the elegant Hotel Beau Rivage. Later, when Frischmann arrived, Schraemli presented him with the best suite of the hotel, with the joking comment, "Now, you see what league membership does for you."[45] Similarly, J.R.E. Wuthrich, an ACL member from the Netherlands, encouraged any league members visiting Utrecht to contact him if they needed assistance or hoped to socialize and talk shop.[46] Noel Pearson, another ACL member from Sydney, Australia, wrote "If any members are visiting this country at any time, I shall be only too pleased to introduce them to other movie enthusiasts and to take them along to an Australian Amateur Cine Society meeting."[47] Furthermore, T.J.A. Hunter, ACL member in Quebec, Canada, warmly invited any member passing through Old Quebec to visit his home.[48] These

[44] James W. Moore, "Amateur Clubs: International," *Movie Makers,* October 1934, 418.
[45] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers,* November 1934, 472.
[46] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers,* June 1940, 260.
[47] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, September 1941, 429.
[48] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers,* April 1941, 154.

communications illustrated how the ACL was a social service and how filmmaking was a simple yet valuable tool for solidifying friendships across borders. Local filmmakers offered simple travel advice, food and lodging, invitations as an honorary guest to local film clubs, and even offers of collaboration. Publicizing hospitable acts among members enforced the organization's sense of fraternity and camaraderie, a central aim of the ACL.

The ACL contributed informally to international relations by encouraging sustained relationships between groups and individuals who shared a common interest in cinema. In 1935, the league directors created the Extraordinary Membership status reserved strictly for national groups of amateur cinematographers. They created the status as an instrument to express the league's esteem for the many distinguished national bodies of cine amateurs with which it was working. They offered membership only to amateur societies believed to be representative of the entire film movement in their countries. In October, the ACL announced the acceptance of Extraordinary Membership in the league by the Hungarian Amateur Film Club of Budapest, Hungary; the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers of London, England; and the Klub der Kino-Amateure Osterreichs of Vienna, Austria.[49] Cine enthusiasts in America, Hungary, Austria, and England openly celebrated their joint commitment to advancing the medium. Maxim pegged partnerships such as these as "a milestone in the rapid international development of amateur movies" that "will greatly contribute to the friendship between nations."[50] In an act of appreciation, the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers conferred upon Maxim the distinguished position of Patron of the Institute, "a gesture," *Movie Makers* described, "of international friendship which will be highly valued by league members the world over."[51] These

[49] James W. Moore, "Amateur clubs," *Movie Makers*, October 1935, 433.
[50] "Notes and News: International Cooperation," *Movie Makers*, June 1930, 374.
[51] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers,* October 1935, 440.

unofficial exchanges clearly modeled those of the League of Nations and official statecraft, but provided an excellent example of how international organizations served as representative bodies for average citizens. The ACL stated frequently that it was not an agent of the American government but did provide a space for film enthusiasts to accentuate the political affairs of their respective homelands. However, the ACL was not always engaged solely in informal diplomacy. Several influential world leaders, policy makers, ambassadors, and diplomats joined the ACL or were influenced by its members.

Throughout its nearly three-decade lifespan, the ACL had members of nobility from at least nine countries. The first ruler to join the ranks of the ACL was Rajah Pratapgirji Narasingirji, the prince of a province in southern India. Little is known of the prince's film work, and the league received little notice from him after he requested membership. Throughout the late 1920s, amateur cinema steadily grew in popularity and the ACL confirmed members from British, Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Italian, and even Cuban nobility. However, the first and only head of state to join the league was Prajadhipok, the King of Siam, who ruled from 1925 to 1935. King Prajadhipok became an active amateur filmmaker soon after Eastman Kodak released the 16mm camera that used reversible film stock. Prajadhipok took to the device quickly and was aware of its potential for communication and influencing public opinion.

At the time, Prajadhipok was still a prince and he was frequently photographed proudly holding his camera or in the act of filming. Prajadhipok was interested in technology and amenable to western ideals. He was curious about American cinema and Hollywood, and he visited Southern California in the summer of 1924 with his wife. Several years later, after he was appointed absolute monarch, Prajadhipok returned to the United States and visited Paramount's massive New York studios. On his first trip, he purchased a wide variety of filmmaking

equipment and also managed to socialize with the unofficial king and queen of Hollywood, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford.[52] Hollywood stars intrigued Prajadhipok but the mechanical aspects of motion pictures fascinated him even more. When Prajadhipok returned to the United States in the early 1930s, Adolph Zukor, President of Paramount Pictures, gave the monarch and his wife Rambaibarni a guided tour of the studio and explained the mechanical functions of the 35mm sound camera (a new invention at the time). Prajadhipok eagerly brought his new knowledge of the studio-system back to Siam.

It is likely that Prajadhipok represented Maxim's ideal candidate to exemplify the potential impact of the ACL. Prajadhipok ruled an ancient society representing a vastly different history and culture than the United States and the western world, but he fully understood that the authority of his ancien regime was waning. Prajadhipok never intended to uphold his absolute authority permanently, and he believed that a constitutional monarchy or democratic Siam was inevitable and in the best interests of his people. Prajadhipok was fully prepared to implement drastic constitutional and democratic reforms, but for years he abstained due to suggestions from his top advisors that many Siamese people were still ill prepared for political participation and that an overall drift toward democracy was premature. It is likely that Maxim considered Prajadhipok—an ardent cinephile and absolute monarch pushing for democracy—as the confirmation of his worldview. Maxim considered the adoption of democracy a natural development after World War I, and cinema as an indispensable component in the process. Maxim applauded Prajadhipok's politics and relished the fact that a ruler of such a notable yet unfamiliar society was on the ACL roster.

[52] Scot Barme, *Love, Sex, and Popular Culture in Thailand* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 54-56.

Prajadhipok first became interested in the ACL through another ACL member, his Royal Highness, Prince Purachatra of Siam, uncle of the King and Minister of Railways of the Siamese Kingdom. On receiving an invitation from the league, Prajadhipok expressed his eager desire to affiliate with an international organization for amateur filmmakers. In fact, Prajadhipok was so enthusiastic that he not only accepted membership on behalf of himself but also encouraged a number of nobles and younger members of the Royal House to enlist. By 1930, approximately one dozen royal courtiers of the Kingdom of Siam were members of the ACL.[53]

Prajadhipok's relationship with the ACL reflected the league's ability to sustain friendly, long-term bonds with influential heads of state. It is worth noting that in the late 1920s and early 1930s, formal relations between policy makers in United States and the Kingdom of Siam were quite limited. A decade had passed since a Siam royal had established diplomatic arrangements with United States representatives. Prajadhipok's healthy friendship with the ACL may have helped to generate positive Siamese perceptions of the United States.[54] Moreover, Prajadhipok was not the only official emissary of a nation that maintained constructive connections with the league.

In October 1938, the ACL welcomed Wilbur J. Carr, American Minister to Czechoslovakia, in Prague, "into the family of *Movie Makers*."[55] Carr's involvement with the

---

[53] "Closeups: What Amateurs are Doing," *Movie Makers*, December 1929, 822.

[54] In 1935, Prajadhipok abdicated from the throne after several years of bitter relations with the self-proclaimed People's Party that had gradually stripped him of most of his authority after a 1932 coup. Prajadhipok grew impatient with the party's militaristic tendencies and offered an ultimatum demanding that the assembly, the center of Siam's policy-making, become an entirely elected body of officials rather than an extension of the party's inner circle. Officials of the People's Party refused to comply so Prajadhipok abdicated the throne and Ananda Mahidol replaced him. Fearing for his safety, Prajadhipok took exile in England, where he remained until his death in July 1941. The July issue of *Movie Makers* published an article on Siam's last absolute monarch, summarizing his reign and briefly chronicling his later film work in England, including a documentary on the English coronation in 1937. *Movie Makers* described the late king as "an ardent movie fan and a gracious sovereign who cautiously introduced bits of modern culture into his ancient country." See: "King Prajadhipok dead," *Movie Makers*, July 1941, 334.

[55] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, October 1938, 478. Federico Ferrara, "The Legend of King Prajadhipok: Tall tales and stubborn facts on the seventh reign in Siam, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* Vol. 43, No. 1 (2012), 4.

ACL suggested how actively placed amateur filmmakers and members of the ACL were in the midst of important world diplomacy. ACL members not directly involved in state affairs still regularly met with policymakers to provide intimate visual representations of global peoples and places. In April 1935, John V. Hansen, ACL member in Washington, D.C., was guest of honor at a dinner given by Ambassador and Madame Troyanovsky at the embassy of the U.S.S.R in Washington. Nearly a year before, Hansen had completed a series of documentary films while traveling in the Soviet Union. In fact, Soviet police had arrested him for "alleged picture taking in Moscow's forbidden Red Square."[56] However, his films were so impressive that Soviet officials eventually contacted him for viewing purposes. At the embassy, the evening's main event was a screening of the films for which Hansen had been arrested. Certainly, the confusion was discussed with humor and good cheer. The incident is one of many accounts of ACL members being asked to screen films for government officials, which demonstrated how policy makers both misunderstood—and understood—amateur works as providing insights into society, culture, and life.

Ralph E. Gray, ACL member in Mexico, was well known for his stunning films of old Mexico. In September 1938, Gray screened his latest work of Mexican fiestas before the Mexican Ambassador and his staff in Washington, D.C. The hour-long program was so popular that Ambassador Castillo Najara requested that Gray screen the same film before a meeting of the Pan American Union (PAU, now known as the Organization of American States), an offer he dutifully accepted.[57] The PAU constituted an international organization representing thirty-five independent nations in the Americas. The central goal of the member nations in creating the PAU was to "strengthen the peace and security of the continent." Najara thought Gray's

[56] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, May 1935, 226.
[57] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, September 1938, 428.

documentary film reflected that commitment. In a similar case, P.H. Sitter, a member of the ACL from Yugoslavia and a director of the national Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), completed a film that tells a story about youth in both urban and rural settings. The production was so successful that by royal command of the King and Queen of Yugoslavia, the film was presented at Dedinje, the Royal Palace, before members of the royal family, the Yugoslav cabinet, and the British and American ministers to Yugoslavia.[58]

All of these events demonstrated how the ACL helped nurture sustainable relationships between filmmakers, film clubs, and politicians. Amateur filmmaking inspired friendships and hospitable communication between ordinary citizens from dozens of countries. In addition, it functioned as a conduit for interactions between the public and influential ambassadors, politicians, and world leaders. These developments nicely documented how an organization of simple avocations could become an informal means of unofficial, international diplomacy. However, the ACL considered its film exchange programs the organization's seminal contribution to global peacekeeping.

SWAPS, created by Maxim, was the ACL's first attempt to establish an efficient lending service that "insured," Maxim wrote, "the absolutely safe transportation and return of valuable films."[59] SWAPS required the league to mail record cards to all members on which they were requested to list their films and whether or not they were willing to exchange them. Members provided a description of the films along with their address and contact information. A master list would then be assembled at headquarters and provided to members who wished to partake. Because assembling a complete record of existing amateur films was time sensitive, *Movie Makers* printed the submitted lists so members could directly contact the films' owners. Maxim

[58] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, August 1934, 334.
[59] "SWAPS: Our Amateur Film Exchange," *Amateur Movie Makers,* December 1926, 25.

started the list by providing descriptions of his personal films: *Fishing Trip*, *Miscellaneous Family Scenes, European Trip,* and *Development of an Old Farm House into a Country Home.* The list is comprised primarily of simple recordings of quotidian activities. According to Maxim and the ACL, interesting films could stem from even the most habitual components of everyday life. Others, however, loaned photoplays, dramatic narratives, and practical films for medicine and science, showing how amateur cinema encompassed an incredibly diverse, and often complicated, collections of genres and production modes.

The ACL also provided printing space in *Movie Makers* to any member asking for specific footage. For example, in January 1929, *Movie Makers* published a blurb for league member Lim Kean Chuan of Penang, Malaysia, who hoped to exchange his films of "ceremonies and tribal customs for sports subjects, such as the tennis matches at Wimbledon."[60] Chuan was likely creating a comparative film by experimenting with juxtaposition and montage, a technique widely promoted by the ACL and dutifully attributed to Russia. The ACL encouraged members to splice footage of different national hobbies together to create a comparative medley of memorable imagery. Furthermore, Chuan's request reflected the broad geographic spread of the ACL and an early example of collaborative, international filmmaking—another intended characteristic of SWAPS.

Ideally, SWAPS not only allowed members to lend films for screening but also provided an arena for collaborative filmmaking. Members could create duplicates of borrowed films and then use them to fill in and complete their own pictures. "Suddenly," *Movie Makers* reported, "to headquarters, comes a rash of requests from filmers in some parts of the world to filmers in many others for cooperation in getting desired footage on this subject of either general interest or

[60] Walter D. Kerst, "The Clinic," *Movie Makers,* January 1929, 871.

special interest."[61] Sometimes, requests were simple, like that of A.G. Hawker, ACL member in New Britain, Connecticut, who needed footage of pheasants in order to complete his narrative on hunters in New England.[62] Similarly, F.H. Holman, ACL member in Euclid, Ohio, requested footage of midwest nature scenes because his camera jammed while recording Tahquamenon Falls in Northern Michigan for a travel film.[63] Others, however, required the assistance of members overseas. Henry A. Nerison, ACL member of Westby, Wisconsin, needed footage of cityscapes in Berlin, Paris, and London to complete his pictorial depiction of Western Europe.[64] Dr. D. Olof of the Swedish Mission Hospital in India needed help from other active filmmakers in India to complete his "story of a Hindu boy who grows up to be the leader of his people."[65] The ACL moderated this form of interaction and hoped members could use SWAPS to help complete one another's projects, even if the invested individuals never personally met. Requests such as this were common in early editions of *Movie Makers* and illustrated how the ACL connected amateur filmmakers from divergent societies. The SWAPS system nonetheless proved costly and inefficient, and ultimately became the permanent Club Film Library and the Film Exchange.

The Film Exchange was in all practicality the same system as SWAPS, except it did not waste printing space in *Movie Makers* and relied on sending a comprehensive list of all films available for exchange, complete with mailing addresses, directly to participating members. However, separate listings for medical and dental films were created and provided only to ACL members who were in fact practicing dentists and doctors. The Club Film Library was one of the

[61] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, April 1938, 164.
[62] Russell C. Holslag, "The Clinic: Pheasant Films Wanted," *Movie Makers*, March 1930, 179.
[63] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, June 1936, 164.
[64] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers*, April 1938, 164.
[65] "Closeups—What filmers are doing," *Movie Makers,* July 1936, 278.

ACL's principal services and was provided free to members. The Club Film Library was a functioning archive of films completed by cine clubs and ACL members throughout the world. The ACL offered the films on loan to film clubs and was instrumental in the wide circulation of amateur cinema from 1929 to 1954. Occasionally, amateur filmmaking organizations agreed systematically to contribute films to the library. In 1930, the Amateur Cinema League of Shanghai, which had a membership of one hundred and thirty individuals, offered the Club Film Library a print of the prize-winning film from every contest it held. The Shanghai Club, like most large cine clubs, was interested in the international aspects of amateur filmmaking and even published a monthly magazine in Chinese, English, and Japanese.[66]

Due to the Club Film Library, ACL cine clubs were able regularly to screen foreign films and champion them as a means of international understanding. In October 1936, for example, the Klub der Kino Amateure Oesterreichs in Vienna, Austria, screened amateur films from six countries to over six hundred people.[67] The event reflected the diversity of screenings in ACL cine clubs and the potential scope of the presentation. Some films screened at hundreds of amateur film events in dozens of countries. George Sewell's *The Gaiety of Nations* (1929), heralded by the ACL as one of the greatest achievements in amateur cinematography, was exceptionally popular. Cine clubs and societies exchanged prints of the film and discussed it frequently at meetings and events. It garnered universal acclaim from amateur film publications and won numerous awards at international film competitions. The short film is just under twelve minutes long and depicts masterfully World War I, global food shortages, corrupt banking, the stock market crash, and immigration restrictions in the United States, subjects professional film industries could not afford to address explicitly. The title, *The Gaiety of Nations*, is ironic, as the

[66] Arthur Gale, "Amateur Clubs," *Movie Makers*, July 1930, 446.
[67] James W. Moore, "Amateur clubs: Austria sees amateurs," *Movie Makers,* April 1936, 158 and 176.

film is a vehement critique of nationalism and a timely commentary on World War I and the Age of Anxiety. Because the film champions the benefits of pacifism and challenges the nature of American world hegemony, it merits a detailed analysis.

The film opens with a title card, stating: "With the exception of one shot the whole of this film was made in a room 15 feet by 11." Like many amateurs, George Sewell shot the film in his own domestic space. Consequently, the title card served two functions: first, it allowed the viewer to embrace the film's "amateur" status, a designation Sewell wore proudly; second, it reflected the total nature of World War I itself, which forced its way directly and indirectly into the private homes of millions. The title card then quickly dissolves into another, "A City in Europe," a statement that universalizes the film's setting and anti-war message to all of Europe, and therefore the West at large. After a series of cityscape shots, created through some fine miniature model work, the camera reveals two men playing chess inside a bar. Their game is intercut with dancing feet and a newspaper, which states, "All the Winners." The scene evokes the sense of confidence and progress those of the Western world held and promoted in Africa, Asia, South America, and the Pacific before the reality of world war tore down their convictions of superiority. The chess match is an obvious symbol foreshadowing the game-like qualities of the impending conflict, a motif used frequently in films concerning the World War I, particularly *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930). Suddenly, however, a gun emerges from darkness and an unknown man is shot in the head, destroying the aura of celebration. A small crowd gathers around a newsboy, the front-page headline is clear: "Grand Duke Assassinated."

The film is highly impressionistic, relying on montage to move across time and space. Obviously, Sewell intended viewers to understand that war is imminent, but instead of showing scenes of soldiers assembling, the camera reveals shadowed figures making hasty stock market

decisions. The word "Sell!" flashes multiple times across the screen as a man repeatedly lowers unidentified numbers and figures on a chalkboard. Suddenly, the fast paced cutting stops on a close-up of a megaphone and a series of titles spring forward: "Rubber … Down … Textiles … Down … Oil … Down … Everything … Down … War." By highlighting commodities essential to European colonial regimes, Sewell was criticizing the economic system that had pulled Africa and Asia into the emerging conflict. Images of newspapers reading "War" then overlap with close-ups of waving flags, an obvious reference to the initial enthusiasm many Europeans had held to fight for their nation. The sentiment, however, is short-lived, as Sewell immediately cuts to machine guns, tanks, and trenches lined with barbed wire, the deadly stock of weapons characteristic of the war. Close-ups of falling bodies rapidly intersect with shot of explosions until the violence eventually stops and the viewer is left to linger on a wide-shot of a hill covered in a mangled barbed wire fence. The center post forms a cross of crucifixion with a soldier's helmet resting on top. The camera slowly fades to black.

The film's third act depicts economic inflation and food shortages intercut with images of graveyards. A close-up of a map of Europe eventually fills the frame. The map slowly flips over and reveals a map of the United States followed by a few quick images of monolithic New York City skyscrapers. A silhouette of the Statue of Liberty appears before slowly dissolving into a dollar sign with a dagger penetrating its center. An image of a massive wall comes into focus with a sign clearly stating, "Ellis Island, House Full." A hulking man donning in an expensive suit and dark glasses emerges from behind a copy of *The New York Herald*. He puffs a cigar in front of an American flag and a sign reading "Business First." The man chuckles deviously to himself as he reads about Europe's crippled financial system. The sequence is somewhat ham-fisted, and loaded with unsubtle political and economic commentary, criticizing the

consequences of the global marketplace and the United States' economic upturn after the war. It suggests the replacement of European world hegemony with American, and vilifies American bankers and businessmen as corrupt officials upholding the true values of the United States, not freedom and personal liberty, but the pursuit of money and power.

The Gaiety of Nations is a testament to the radical nature of many amateur works, especially compared to those of major studios. Few professional filmmakers could afford to tackle such controversial subject matter for fear of alienating key markets and demographics. Free from financial and business constrictions, however, an amateur like Sewell was able to use amateur organizations for distribution, exhibition, and feedback. Yet overall, *The Gaiety of Nations* is exceptional in regard to its ambition, style, and substance. Most amateur films were not overtly politicized, and a content-based reading of them, such as this, provide only cursory understandings. For historians, an empiricist reading of amateur films is not always the most fruitful avenue for examination. Often, amateur films are simple, cinematic records of various facets of daily society and life. Consequently, questions like "what is the film about?" or "what does it mean or say?" can raise an inappropriate standard of critique, one that lends itself more to studying films of professional industries. Amateurs had never intended to receive the same treatment. To appreciate fully the merit of many amateur films, it is important to keep in mind that it was the ACL's Film Exchange, a trailblazing social network, that was moving them efficiently across borders and cultures. Here it helps to acknowledge the famous reasoning of the renowned media theorist Marshall McLuhan, for the medium was the message.

One such film, *Transport* (1933), created by J.B. Thubron, actually focuses entirely upon "world-wide methods of moving men and merchandise." *Transport* is a perfect example of how many amateur filmmakers preferred to focus on broad issues and themes that anyone, anywhere

could appreciate. While traveling around the world, Thubron spent months filming the different modes of transportation used in South Africa, India, Kashmir, Java, Singapore, Ceylon, Egypt, Malta, and Great Britain. Each location contains a title card before cutting between several simple images of various forms of transportation, including steamships, boats, cable cars, horses, rickshaws, bulls, camels, elephants, mule-drawn carriages, sampans, push carts, litters, shoulder poles, canoes, airplanes, parachutes, bicycles, automobiles, and trains. His topic, "transport," appropriately reflected the growing systems of transportation and communication, in which amateur film was deeply embedded, and that allowed well-to-do individuals like Thubron to travel throughout Africa and Asia. More importantly, however, Thubron shot the film in pictorial fashion, favoring well-composed frames with a wide-depth of field. His subjects, positioned at eye-level, never appear anxious or uncomfortable from the camera's possessive gaze. Besides the obvious benefits that come from seeing aspects of urban and rural life around the world in the early 1930s, the film is important in how it renders its subjects as equals. The film does not favor one people, place, or mode of transportation over another, but rather places them all on the same photographic plane. Images of colonial activities are present on the periphery, such as an indigenous man pulling a European expatriate in a rickshaw, yet Thubron does not focus on them. Instead, Thubron honed in on a simple theme, "transport," demonstrating how all people, regardless of culture and place, possessed the same need and ability to move both people and goods. Ultimately, Thubron universalized his "world-wide" subjects.

During the 1920s and 1930s, filmmakers and critics were still defining the specifications of various genres. Consequently, an amateur publication might label Thubron's *Transport* as any or all of the following: documentary, ethnography, educational film, record film, and travel film. The travel film genre was particularly fluid and popular among amateurs. It was a designation

given to any work, regardless of intent, that displayed a culture or place that was foreign to the filmmaker. The ACL embraced travel films and considered them extraordinarily valuable to nurturing world peace since they "allowed one to globetrot in the comfort of their own home."[68] They were incredibly popular within the Film Exchange and Club Film Library and embodied the ACL's commitment to familiarizing amateurs with different cultures. These "virtual voyages," however, ranged dramatically in regards to content and production value. Sometimes ACL members produced serious, anthropological films in an effort to understand foreign communities and places. *Movie Makers* contained dozens of articles on ACL members creating intimate portraits of indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia, South America, and the American West. But more often than not, ACL members unintentionally created exoticized representations of unfamiliar peoples, thus ironically enforcing their "otherness." Moreover, most advanced amateurs were aware that "nothing can be more dull or uninteresting" than a poorly made travel film, therefore their goal was to assemble compelling and original travel narratives, which displayed high production value and technical proficiency.[69] Thorough and meticulous planning consequently became the mantra for most serious amateurs. "With forethought," P.W. West, an expert travel filmmaker, wrote, "travel pictures can be made truly artistic, interesting, and far superior to the usual stereotyped, disconnected recording of each place. The idea is not merely to expose hundreds of feet of film, but to seek to record the true atmosphere of a place in a few simple touches."[70] Since the ACL equated world peace with the ability of distant individuals to see foreign cultures, one must ask, what did amateur filmmakers consider "the true atmosphere of a place"? The films of ACL member Tad Nichols provide some understanding.

---

[68] "Globe Trotting… in Your Home," *Movie Makers,* January 1929, 890.
[69] Smith, 271.
[70] W.P.West, "Angles and Arches: Notes on How to Catch the Spirit of Old Europe in Your Film," *Amateur Movie Makers,* June 1927, 13.

Nichols considered Hollywood depictions of the American West grossly inaccurate since they downplayed or omitted entirely the presence of indigenous peoples. Nichols was an active amateur and determined that his films could give a presence to marginalized indigenous groups, complicating the tired myth of the Wild West as a hostile environment in need of Anglo civilization. Nichols produced true amateur ethnographies made possible through healthy friendships with American Indian groups that actively contributed to his filmmaking process. Nichols produced dozens of films while living with nomadic Navajo and Apache families in the southwestern United States. In 1937, Nichols graduated from the University of Arizona with degrees in anthropology and geology. After studying under some of America's most influential photographers, such as Ansel Adams and Edward Weston, Nichols dedicated himself fulltime to cinematographic pursuits. He became a noted filmmaker and photographer while shooting the expeditions of the famous geologist and naturalist Edwin McKee. Soon after, the United States Indian Service hired Nichols to produce instructional films for American Indians. Eventually, Walt Disney Productions and the Sierra Club employed Nichols in their film and photography divisions.

Nichols crafted produced his most interesting works independently during his stays with several Navajo families. In amateur film circles, Nichols' film *Navajo Rug Weaving* (1939) garnered significant praise and a place in several "Ten Best" amateur competitions. In the short eighteen-minute film, Nichols documented several Navajo women's laborious process for making rugs. The film is genuine ethnography and beautifully humanizes, for what was likely the first time, a Navajo community in gorgeous 16mm color Kodachrome. The simple premise makes for compelling viewing as Nichols artfully captures the character and contours of a way of life shaped by the deserts of the southwestern United States. Nichols screened and lectured about

the film in popular museums across the country. The Navajo families spoke highly of Nichols who "came to know them as fine people and true friends."[71] The relationship between Nichols and the Peshlakai family, his primary actors/subjects, epitomized amateur cinema's cross-cultural capabilities and complicated the typical American origin story popularized by influential figures, such as Fredrick Jackson Turner and Theodore Roosevelt. Nichols' film showcases the lived experiences of a minority family in the 1930s, a decade of heated debate between the Navajo Nation and the United States over property and livestock regulations. The family lived only a few miles from Monument Valley, which Hollywood had already popularized as the quintessential landscape of the American West. Tad Nichols' films, however, offered the Peshlaki family, among several others, a new platform for cultural expression, curbing the popular 'whitewashing' of nineteenth-century American history.

Unfortunately, most amateur filmmakers were not as perceptive as Nichols and did not consider complexity or nuance in their work. Producing a travel film simply meant photographing what they, prior to their arrival, imagined would represent the culture of their destination. "Formerly," an article in *Movie Makers* reported, "Americans went abroad to 'see' Europe or 'do' the Continent, but today they travel to see themselves abroad."[72] This aura of narcissism often underscored amateur travel filmmaking. For many amateurs, travel filming provided the opportunity not to experience a different culture, but rather to "see themselves" interacting with the signs and symbols they considered emblematic of their host nation's identity. The insistence of amateur organizations on thorough planning enforced this mentality because unless filmmakers already knew a great deal about the place they were going, then the process of meticulously planning a film before arrival, which many amateurs did, destroyed any opportunity

[71] "Practical Films," *Movie Makers,* February 1941, 66.
[72] "Who Started the Fun," *Amateur Movie Makers,* December 1926, 7.

for the filmmaker to learn anything contrary to their preconceived perception of their destination. Often, this led many amateurs to focus their attention on clichéd scenarios characteristic of the status quo, like trying to "catch the spirit of old Europe in film."[73] Many American and Canadian amateurs, for example, went to great lengths to photograph cathedrals, castles, and monuments—all popular symbols of nationhood—without "tourists stamped all over it" to enforce a romanticized representation of a bygone chapter in European history.

Likewise, many ACL publications encouraged amateurs traveling to the non-western world, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, to avoid shooting anything reminiscent of modernity, including automobiles, factories, power plants, and anything else related to technological systems.[74] This allowed them to uphold the Orientalist fantasy of the developing world as eternally exotic and primitive. Occasionally, many ACL members even adopted an attitude reminiscent of the nineteenth-century ethos of the white man's burden. For example, in a remote part of Umuahia, Nigeria, Dr. LL Thomas, an ACL member from the United States, reported in *Movie Makers* his challenges while making films intended to inform indigenous Nigerians about the habits and dangers of disease-carrying insects. Thomas condescendingly expressed his frustrations while trying to educate "the natives who cannot read and have a very limited understanding of the relationship between cause and effect." A portion of the film, Thomas explained, "must contrast the unsanitary, dirty native village with the clean one in an effort to improve living conditions."[75] The exploits of Marvin Breckinridge, an American ACL member who traveled to southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, in "primitive Africa," revealed a similarly racist impulse. After filming several golf courses catering to wealthy tourists,

[73] West, 13.
[74] Gardner Wells, "Around the World with a Little Movie Camera," *Amateur Movie Makers,* January 1927, 13.
[75] "Practical Films," *Movie Makers,* May 1935, 208.

Breckinridge decided to make a cinematographic account of "an important influence of the white man on the black" by filming the Lovedale Institute, one of the region's prominent missionary schools. With the help of his three "black caddies," he nicknamed Whiskey, Sixpence, and Jumbo, Breckinridge managed to photograph several scenes of daily life. However, Breckinridge found the task more challenging than he had expected. "My native boys," he claimed, "would sometimes get absent minded." Breckinridge, who spoke no Mashona, the local language, learned the words for "wait" and "come here" to keep his assistants focused on their tasks. "Luckily," Breckinridge wrote, "the Africans are not beggars. … However, among themselves, an exchange of presents is considered courtesy." Breckinridge thanked his assistants by giving them lemon drops and often spoke to them as if they were animals in a petting zoo. "They adore sugar," Breckinridge wrote, completely unaware of his patronizing demeanor; "I can assure anybody who plans to go to photograph natives that if he is always cheerful and shows a friendly interest in the African, he will not lack cooperation."[76]

Written accounts of Breckinridge's travels in Africa detail many instances of him subtly verifying his confidence in white superiority. Besides his condescending conduct toward the locals, Breckinridge frequently chuckled at the "natives who were afraid of being photographed." In fact, many ACL members lampooned "that instinctive fear of the camera common to all primitive people."[77] Since amateurs typically considered candid shots more desirable, *Movie Makers* frequently listed strategies on how to photograph subjects inconspicuously. For many amateur filmmakers shooting in the developing world, distinct power relations emerged between those who operated the 16mm camera and those they had photographed. To the "primitive subject," the camera represented a source for "magic" that might "work evil," "cast a spell," or

[76] Marvin Breckinridge, "Filming a New Africa," *Movie Makers,* April 1935, 173.
[77] Robert Lang, "Shooting in Shanghai, *Movie Makers,* June 1929, 377.

"burn eyes out."[78] To the filmmakers, the camera reflected their sophistication and ascendance into modernity. The technological divide between the two parties enforced the amateur filmmaker's sense of dominance, which often hindered the possibility for true cross-cultural dialogue.

One ACL publication even outlined how to photograph the different women of the world. "Each man to his fancy," the author wrote, "and no two nations alike . . . Asia, Africa, Siam, and Tahiti—the world is full of feminine beauty with which you can fill your movie album." The author detailed how to best capture the "slight and sloe eyed women of the Orient," the "buxom" women of Germany, or the "heft" of women of the Arctic Circle, stressing to "win them over" so they could "pose for you in their native costumes."[79] The article functioned as little more than a how-to manual for men to exoticize and fetishize women. The widespread exchange of amateur travel films such as this gave individuals, predominantly white men, an opportunity to conceptualize and possess others. The goal was too often to highlight the *differences* of each location, thus accentuating its "otherness." Amateur travel films were far from homogenous, and many amateurs clearly never sacrificed their goal to capture the true atmosphere of a place in favor of exoticized pretty pictures.

As much as the ACL promoted thorough planning, they also encouraged filmmakers to embrace the spontaneity and drama of everyday life. ACL publications provided many strategies on how amateurs could prepare themselves and their camera to capture those rare but exciting moments when amateur cinema would confirm its status as the "Hollywood of real people."[80] Those cinematic moments might include the filming of a "train wreck," a "sudden uprising or

[78] Marvin Breckinridge, "Filming a New Africa," *Movie Makers,* April 1935, 172.
[79] Beth Brown, "Let Beauty Blush in Film," *Movie Makers*, June 1938, 284.
[80] "Who STARTED the Fun?" *Movie Makers*, December 1926, 9.

native rioting," "a Chinese cop beating a rickshaw driver," or "soldiers driving off the coolies with whips, gun butts and bayonettes."[81] Amateurs at times involved themselves in dangerous situations, risking injury and bodily harm for the sake of their film. Most amateur filmmakers ultimately recognized that "while we are 'all brothers under the skin,' each country, like each human, has its unique characteristics," and if the goal of travel filming was to capture the reality of a place, then the filmmaker should strive to photograph everything, warts and all.[82] Some amateurs created little more than simple point-and-shoot records of the signs, symbols, and activities that states and tourist industries had designated as representative of the nation. Others captured intimate moments that professional industries never could due to the extensive nature of their equipment and crew. Nevertheless, amateur cinema was always an instrument of commoditization, reducing nations, peoples, and cultures to canisters of celluloid that could be shipped and consumed around the globe.

The Film Exchange and the Club Film Library represented an entirely new avenue for screening films. It was an alternative to professional film industries and provided members an intimate window into the personal lives of others, many of whom hailed from distant countries. The Film Exchange and the Club Film Library were early forms of social networking, which, among other functions, aimed to alleviate some of the quarrels stemming from politics and Hollywood. In September 1934, the ACL envisioned the creation of a "yearly world's history," compiled under the leadership of Maxim, aided by historians, and comprised entirely of amateur film.[83] Ideally, the massive hodgepodge would project records, from across the globe, of events that commercial movie producers could not afford to attempt. This bold idea never came to

[81] Smith, 272.
[82] Smith, 272.
[83] Editorial, "The free amateur," *Movie Makers*, September 1934, 361.

fruition but remained a testament to the ACL's association of amateur film with "real" and "authentic" images of society, culture, and life, as opposed to Hollywood, which was "synthetic," "artificial," and "profit driven."[84]

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the ACL helped to position the 16mm camera in the vanguard of documenting the increasing integration of the world after World War I. Maxim hoped that the spread of organized amateur filmmaking would allow individuals, without government intervention, to exhibit honest representations of themselves and others in a collective effort to humanize foreign cultures. Until his death in 1936, Maxim upheld his belief in amateur film as a "world peace agent" that fostered friendships across borders:

> I know that if I could send my home-made film, called 'Winter in Connecticut,' to some other amateur in Timbuktu or Nikolajewskoje or Caraguatatuba and get back one showing conditions in those places, the two of us would not only be closer together, but we would both understand and appreciate the problems and advantages of our respective countries better than we could in any other way; we wouldn't be in such a hurry to cut each other to pieces in the name of Mars.[85]

For decades, the ACL fostered various means of informal and formal diplomacy. Examining how the ACL directly and indirectly united divergent film clubs, members, and policy makers, including ambassadors and heads of state, it is possible to understand amateur film as more than simple recreation and leisure. It was a legitimate peacekeeping force.

[84] "Who STARTED the Fun?" *Movie Makers*, December 1926, 9.
[85] "Amateur Cinematography as World Peace Agent," *Amateur Cinematographer*, July 1926, 7 and 18.

Conclusion

On September 1, 1939, German forces marched into the Republic of Poland. Under the authority of Adolf Hitler, over one million troops stormed over Poland's western border and almost obliterated Poland's standing army. The aggression provoked outrage throughout Europe, and statesmen in the United Kingdom and France called for an immediate ceasefire. When Hitler ignored their demands, the United Kingdom and France quickly declared war against Germany. However, the Allies were slow to mobilize a counter-offensive and could not deter Joseph Stalin from also invading Poland with a half million Soviet troops. Poland's government had no other choice but to flee into exile. Two months later, after Poland was partitioned into German and Soviet occupied zones, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios released the powerful anti-war cartoon *Peace on Earth* (1939).

Peace on Earth is a nine-minute short film that foreshadowed the onset of World War II by depicting a dystopian world where humans have gone extinct because of their perpetual violence. In their absence, anthropomorphic animals have inherited the earth and constructed a prosperous society from the ruins of what was once human civilization. Helmets, engines, guns, and bullet shells have all been transformed into charming homes and villages that make up the city of "Peaceville." Many of the film's animators were veterans of World War I, who drew inspiration from their personal experiences in the trenches. The film was a departure from the earlier works of director Hugh Harmon, an animator best known for creating the character Bosko for Warner Bros.' *Looney Tunes* series. Until *Peace on Earth*, most of Harmon's cartoons were whimsical tales revolving around the exploits of the loveable "Bosko." He was not an overtly political man and never incorporated war or social commentary into any of his other works. According to Harmon, despite the fact it "was seriously themed [and] had nothing funny in it,"

Peace on Earth was one of his greatest accomplishments.[1] Fred Quimby, one of MGM's animation producers, claimed the studio had to release the film given the events in Europe. "With conditions as they are," he claimed, "this Christmas was the logical time to offer in place of the usual light and frothy cartoon a subject dramatically imparting the full significance of Peace On Earth, Good Will to Men."[2] The film's timely release ironically signaled the end of the Pax Cinemana and a shift in popular understandings of world peace. A historical and textual analysis of this underappreciated work helps explain why films were unable to prevent another global catastrophe and how internationalism ironically contributed to the emergence of World War II.

The film begins with the title card "Peace on Earth" featured in front of a bombed out church. A large fire looms in the background as the silhouettes of marching soldiers pass across the screen. As the image disappears, the audience begins to hear the sound of children singing a rendition of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." Snow falls heavily as the camera pans slowly across the remnants of a war zone, revealing a stained glass image of a faceless Jesus Christ as well as rusting firearms, tangles of barbed wire, and bullet-riddled helmets. The source of the singing slowly comes into view: three adolescent squirrels dressed in human clothes. It only now becomes apparent that this is a children's Christmas cartoon. An elderly squirrel voiced by Mel Blanc, the famous voice actor most known for playing Bugs Bunny, passes by the children and offers words of encouragement, "That's the spirit sonnies, peace on earth!"[3] The older squirrel

[1] Hugh Harmon Interview, available at: http://www.michaelbarrier.com/Interviews/Harman/interview_hugh_harman.htm (accessed May 17, 2017).
[2] "Quimby Says Time is Opportune for Dramatic Type Xmas Cartoon," *Showman's Trade Review*, December 9, 1939, 28. Note: Hugh Harmon took issue with Quimby's comments and later claimed that Quimby actively tried to halt the production due to his fears that it would not turn a profit. Once the film was successful, Harmon argued, Quimby tried to take all of the credit for its release.
[3] *Peace on Earth*. Directed by Hugh Harmon. Los Angeles: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939.

strolls into his cozy home and is greeted by his wife and two grandchildren. As he makes his way to sit by the open fire, he declares cheerfully, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men." The little squirrels leap into his arms and ask an unusual question, "What are men, Grandpa?" As the elder squirrel describes the peculiar two-legged "varmints," a nightmarish image of a soldier wearing a gas mask marches eerily towards the screen and stares directly at the viewer. "They was like monsters," the Grandpa exclaims, "they wore great big iron pots on their heads and they carried terrible lookin' shootin' irons with knives on the end of 'em." The grim description startles the children who are now mesmerized by the musings. "Oh Grandpa," a little squirrel chirps, "I'm glad there ain't no more men around." The film's second act cuts back and forth between the elderly squirrel telling a story and the alleged last years of humankind. The juxtaposition between scenes of talking woodland critters and realistic World War I-inspired imagery distinguish *Peace on Earth* from typical holiday specials. Harmon understood clearly the power of irony and his story has much in common with the works of seminal World War I authors Erich Remarque and Wilfred Owen.

The film makes it clear that human nature is inherently violent and constantly provoking warfare. "Why they was always a-fightin' and a-feudin' at one another," the Grandpa squirrel claims, "They'd no sooner get one argument settled then they'd find something else to fuss about." As he speaks, hordes of faceless soldiers march across the screen and tanks steamroll through what were once prosperous villages. The images evoke photographs from the infamous Rape of Belgium. What was once an idyllic countryside is now an apocalyptic wasteland. The sky is stormy and conjures a sense of impending doom. Reminiscent of the paintings of Paul Nash and Christopher Nevinson, the war sequences adhere to a dark monochromatic palette and only use splashes of color to accentuate explosions and sporadic muzzle flashes. Some of the

tension is broken when the Grandpa squirrel states sincerely, “When they couldn’t think of nothing else to wrangle over, the vegetarians began to fight the meat-eating people.” To satirize the folly of blind nationalism, a flag donning a carrot moves toward an opposite flag picturing a whole roasted pig. This bit of comic relief, however, is quickly shattered by images of roaring munitions and crashing planes. The sounds of heavy artillery escalate to an unnerving silence. Suddenly, the sound of a single drum and a dissonant violin builds as the Grandpa squirrel declares somberly, “they fought until there was only two of them left.” The minimalist score, arranged by the legendary composer Scott Bradley, creates an unnerving sense of suspense. Slowly emerging from their foxholes, the remaining two men point their rifles at one another and fire. The sequence ends with one of the soldiers sinking slowly into a pool of mud and blood. He reaches his hand above the surface for one last grasp at life before finally succumbing to his dismal fate. “And that was the end of the last man on earth,” the Grandpa squirrel states as if he had just finished reading a lighthearted fairy tale.

Without any humans, the natural world is able to thrive once again. Rays of sunlight break through the clouds and fall upon the ruins of a church. It is here in the third act that the film’s Judeo-Christian themes become apparent. The animals gradually emerge from the forest and find a perfectly preserved Bible with the Ten Commandments clearly legible. It is the dawn of a new era. “Though shalt not kill,” an owl says while reading the Commandments to a crowd of curious onlookers. “Looks like a mighty good book of rules,” the Grandpa squirrel interjects, “but I guess them men didn’t pay much attention to it.” As the owl continues to flip through the pages of the Bible, he comes across a relevant passage, “Ye shall rebuild the old wastes.” These words inspire the animals to join together and merrily construct the society of “Peaceville” under the guiding hand of God. While the animals frolic about their new home, the scene cuts back to

the Grandpa's house where the two young squirrels now sleep soundly in a wooden crib, evoking the innocence and hope of a nativity scene. The song "Silent Night" fades in as the Grandma squirrel leans over her loved ones and croons, "Sleep in heavenly peace." There are a number of ways to interpret the film's moral lesson, which sheds light on how the rise of fascist aggression changed popular notions of world peace.

Peace on Earth is an effective protest film that took aim at the looming specter of another world war and channeled many Americans' reluctance to engage in what seemed like a European conflict. Pacifist sentiment was ubiquitous in the United States before the attack on Pearl Harbor and most American statesmen wanted to keep the country out of war, despite Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland. In this context, one can see how the film was a product of those fleeting years before 1941 when many Americans had clung to the belief that neutrality was more important than actively restraining the threat of fascism. In addition, the film tapped into the United States' evangelical Christian heritage. For decades, many prominent religious groups considered war a symptom of moral decay. It was an indication that society had drifted away from God and his teachings. A Gallup poll conducted several months before the release of the film indicated that the majority of Americans had not read the Bible in any capacity within the last month.[4] The secularization of daily life concerned many influential figures in the anti-war movements who promoted Jesus Christ as the definitive symbol of non-violence and peace. The Great Depression rejuvenated the activities of a handful of vocal evangelical preachers who had claimed that the world's current financial and national struggles were God's way of punishing people for putting money and power before spirituality. Only by returning to the principles of the

[4] Hadley Cantril, ed., *Public Opinion: 1935-1946* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951). 39.

Bible, they argued, could Armageddon be avoided. The film shared this sentiment but offered a glimmer of hope to its largely child audience.

World peace, the film made clear, was possible only if succeeding generations adhere to basic Judeo-Christian morality and heed the lessons of the past. The children of 1939 needed to recognize that war brought about nothing but chaos and death. They had to be different than their parents and grandparents. They had to be better. Because it empowered the agency of children in the midst of impending war, critics and parents unsurprisingly praised the film. "This is a Christmas offering," one reviewer stated, "which is so significant in subject matter that it should be shown throughout the world to touch the hearts of mankind in a war mad world."[5] Critics specifically celebrated the film's unique animation, script, sound design, and ability to blend elements of fantasy with a message that one critic considered "as timely as a current newsreel."[6] Many scoffed at the notion that it was even a Christmas film. "Here is the best cartoon of the year," the *Motion Picture Herald* reported, "Don't wait for next Christmas; play it now. The war angle is more dominant than the Christmas."[7] The film was one of MGM's highest grossing cartoons and was released theatrically with the blockbuster *Gone With the Wind* (1939). It was nominated for an Academy Award and screened in an array of theaters every December for years after its initial release.[8] However, it raised most of its profits not in movie theaters but in classrooms, churches, and civic centers. "Because it represents useful ammunition for the cause of Peace," a distribution advertisement declared, "a special advance screening for your

[5] "Peace on Earth," *Motion Picture Reviews*, December 1939, 2.
[6] "Animating Mother Nature," *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Short Story*, November and December, 1939, 8.
[7] "Peace on Earth," *Motion Picture Herald*, February 24, 1940, 48.
[8] *Peace on Earth* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film, but lost to Disney's *The Ugly Duckling* (1939).

local ministerial association, newspaper editorial writers, heads of school and womens club groups will return box office dividends."[9]

Peace on Earth was an enormous hit with Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). They worked diligently to incorporate the film into school curriculum to provide students with the opportunity to discuss world peace and what was developing in Europe. The California Congress of Parents and Teachers, one of the largest and most active PTAs in the United States, gave the film a special award that acknowledged its wholesome benefit to American youth.[10] Various publications, such as *Life Magazine*, *Good Housekeeping Magazine,* and *Parents' Magazine,* also endorsed the film and celebrated it as a profound yet family-friendly adventure. In the 1930s, it was not uncommon for lifestyle and home economics magazines to work with local PTA chapters to develop film advisory boards. Studios like MGM and Warner Bros. took the opinions of such associations seriously when developing films for children. Receiving their approval helped the studios strengthen their reputation as purveyors of healthy and constructive entertainment, countering the heated criticism that usually surrounded the release of their lucrative crime dramas. If the studios received any positive comments from these advisory boards, they usually incorporated them into their marketing campaigns. *Peace on Earth* received an award from *Good Housekeeping Magazine* and was selected by *Parents' Magazine* as the "Movie of the Month" for December 1939.[11] MGM included these accolades on a number of its advertisements. In addition, the film was the first cartoon to receive a citation from the commission of the Nobel Peace Prize. The acknowledgment legitimated the cartoon as a serious commentary on world peace and brought it to the attention of academics and politicians. In

[9] "Peace on Earth," *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Short Story*, October 1939, 18.
[10] "PTA Picks 1939 "Bests,"" International Photographer, February 1940, 23.
[11] "Let's Look at the Record," *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Short Story*, June 1940, 6-7. "Peace on Earth," *Motion Picture Herald*, December 9, 1939, 81.

January 1940, Dr. Frederic Thrasher, a sociologist at New York University, invited officials from the Italian, Japanese, French, and Chinese consulates to attend a screening of *Peace on Earth* in one of his trailblazing courses on cinema and society.[12]

Peace on Earth clearly generated a great deal of attention. However, what was missing from these discussions was a nuanced explanation of its inherent pessimism. Though the film is a satire, its depiction of a world without war demands critical assessment. The underlying tragedy of the story is the fact that world peace comes only when humans no longer exist. Humans, not technology, disease, or natural disasters, are shown as the biggest threat to themselves and the planet. Their weapons wreak havoc on natural resources, namely air and water, and their incessant fighting forces all of animal life to watch in terror from the sidelines. Once humans kill themselves off, the anthropomorphic woodland creatures are able to create an inherently better world. This scenario does not provide a typical happy ending. The absence of humans reveals how the idealism that had flourished throughout the 1920s and survived though the hardships of the Great Depression was largely irrelevant in a world teeming with fascist expansion. World peace, the film made perfectly clear, was not a reality for the current generation. After Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland, most Americans were confident that another world war was inevitable and that it would prove more destructive than the last. Policymakers and the public began to mock Woodrow Wilson's once famous declaration that World War I was "the war to end all wars" and treated the Peace at Versailles as little more than a naive delusion. By targeting children, the film demonstrated how world peace was their responsibility. The future hinged on their ambitions. It simply could not be achieved in the present in light of current events. This cynical treatment of world peace was a radical departure from the sentiment of the preceding two

[12] "See 'Peace on Earth'," *Motion Picture Daily*, January 12, 1940, 2.

decades. As discussions of world peace became relegated predominantly to children, the term quickly lost its currency both in Hollywood and in matters of statecraft.

Though public opinion polls did not exist until the mid-1930s, the historical record indicates that a large share of Americans genuinely believed that world peace was the natural result of World War I. Many assumed the immense violence that characterized the war would deter future conflicts. In addition, many believed the League of Nations would put an end to European nationalist aggression and that the United States would ensure that liberal democracy flourished around the world. In 1939, most Americans detested the idea of war and embraced pacifism or neutrality. Gallup and Roper polls indicated that ninety percent of Americans believed that the United States should not declare war on Germany nor send troops to support Poland, the United Kingdom, and France. Similarly, when asked, "If another war like the World War develops in Europe, should America take part again?" Ninety-five percent of respondents said "no." However, eighty-four percent also claimed that if another world war erupted, the United States would not be able to stay out.[13] These polls implied that most Americans had accepted war as inevitable and world peace as beyond reach. The geo-political order established after World War I seemed incapable of preventing another global catastrophe. The basic tenets of internationalism looked unrealistic.

For nearly two decades, liberal idealists had argued repeatedly that peace would come from strengthening international organizations and laws. Idealists worked to dismantle isolationist politics and champion democratic institutions. Filmmakers, activists, policymakers, and businessmen used film to advance those interests in a genuine pursuit of world peace. The language and paradigms of the nineteenth century still thrived in the United States, ensuring that

[13] Cantril, 966-968.

even the most benevolent peace advocates would face conflict and opposition. Americans generally interpreted the world as a series of contrasts: civilized and savage; Western and Eastern; developed and underdeveloped; and national and international. As seen, the efforts of the Pax Cinemana were embedded in this discourse and its supporters were by and large unable to transcend these shallow notions in any meaningful way. As a result, it was nearly impossible to create a cohesive action plan for peace that effectively addressed the needs of all peoples and places. The nationalist aggression that fueled World War II demonstrated clearly that internationalist sentiment did not inherently cultivate non-violence. The wartime activities of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IECI) and the Amateur Cinema League (ACL) made it clear that internationalism and nationalism were not opposites, but rather complementary forces that operated under the same basic ideology.

When Mussolini withdrew Italy from the League of Nations, he brought the infrastructure of the IECI with him. He cleared the institute of all non-Italian personnel and ceased the publication of the multi-lingual *International Review of Educational Cinema.* The state-owned *L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa* ("The Educational Film Union," or LUCE), absorbed most of the IECI's resources and reformatted them to advance Mussolini's propaganda campaign. Newsreels and documentaries highlighting the benefits of the fascist order replaced the diverse body of works the IECI had only a few years earlier promoted as educational cinema. The new goal was to expand "the outreaching of Italian culture to the Friends of Italy."[14] The remark was a clear rebuke of the former partnership with the United Kingdom and France, as well as the informal pact with the United States and its film industry. The new "Friends of Italy" were of course Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan, demonstrating how the Axis alliance had

[14] Gladys Murphy Graham, "Film in Changing Europe," *Cinema Progress,* June and July, 1939, 12.

established itself not only in political treaties, but in film organizations as well. Celebratory toasts to the Italian military supplanted the IECI's idealistic calls for world peace and international brotherhood. Mussolini even hired his son, Vittorio Mussolini, to edit a new journal dedicated to the benefits of educational film. The journal published numerous articles defending the moral necessity of authoritarian fascism and the threat that the League of Nations posed to peace in Europe.

The nationalizing of the IECI's resources troubled many in the League of Nations. The leadership of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) was particularly disturbed and struggled to find a way for France to fund and base a new version of the organization. Others looked to Switzerland as a potential host and hoped that its long history of holding disarmament conferences might reinvigorate its activities at this critical juncture.[15] A large number of cynical critics, however, insisted that Mussolini's initial involvement had doomed the organization since day one. "Dictatorship and academic liberalism mix like oil and water," one reporter noted.[16] For the harshest critics, the transformation of the IECI proved that the League of Nations was irrelevant and could not manage even the most marginal of tasks. An altruistic, educational body transitioned almost seamlessly into a mouthpiece for Mussolini. A reporter for the journal *Cinema Progress* best summed up the seemingly ironic demise of the IECI: "A highly self-conscious and calculating nationalism had taken the place of the international; a League of Nations function had given way to a Ministry of Propaganda."[17] Such actions were not limited solely to fascists, however.

[15] "U.S. Companies 'Hasty' Says Prof. Lebedinsky," *Motion Picture Herald,* February 18, 1939, 36.
[16] "A Little More Foreign News," *Hollywood Spectator*, February 12, 1938, 14-15.
[17] Gladys Murphy Graham, "Film in Changing Europe," *Cinema Progress,* June and July, 1939, 12.

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, the Amateur Cinema League (ACL) transformed into an unofficial appendage of the state and actively contributed to the war effort. The pages of *Movie Makers* detailed how members could create their own propaganda films that encouraged a call-to-arms by promoting hyper-patriotic notions of "what the flag means to you."[18] *Movie Makers* also published several editorials describing how amateur filmmakers could contribute to "setting the key for national thinking."[19] The statement seemed to challenge directly the international vision and purpose that the ACL's founder Hiram Percy Maxim vehemently tried to promote. According to the ACL leadership during the war, the first step to prepare amateur filmmakers for the national armament effort was to encourage the production of nationalist films that detailed "what the United States meant to its citizens." James Moore, an ACL executive director, provided a template for how ACL members could construct their own propaganda films. His template, titled "These We Defend," called for using images like the American flag, bald eagles, and children playing baseball, "free people who are free to go and come as they choose in the pursuit of happiness."[20] The clichéd scenarios demonstrated how the ACL leadership *was* willing to bend its paramount philosophy. But, the strongest example of the ACL's ideological duality during the war came in April 1942, at the request of the United States federal government.

Government officials called upon the ACL to help assemble an enormous index of films and photographs of areas outside the United States. They realized that amateur travel films could provide a window into Axis and Allied territories, which might prove invaluable to strategic military planning and intelligence. "Our government," *Movie Makers* reported, "recognizes our

[18] James W. Moore, "These We Defend," *Movie Makers*, July 1940, 329.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

hobby as a national weapon, and it calls upon us to use that weapon intelligently and actively, under its direction, to win the war."[21] The ACL leadership drafted a notice for all members to send films or photographs of places outside the United States to league headquarters for government review. Dubbing the task "a patriotic duty," the ACL instructed participants to complete a brief survey documenting exactly when and where the footage was taken and whether the government could produce duplicates.[22] Apparently, amateur travel films, originally intended as instruments for diplomacy and international understanding, had become instruments of war. Echoing Karl Marx's famous description of modern life, "everything was pregnant with its contrary."

The nationalist activities of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IECI) and the Amateur Cinema League (ACL) during World War II demonstrated how the relationship between cinema and the nation was varied and complex. Between 1914 and 1939, most Americans accepted the nation as the apex of human organization. They considered nations natural communities and consequently the rightful political unit for each and every culture in the world. Adherents of the Pax Cinemana professed that the opportunity to *see* how "other" peoples lived was the basis for international understanding. Films that nurtured a sense of familiarity with different customs, attitudes, languages, and races would humanize potential enemies thus eliminating any catalyst for war. Therefore, this vision for peace rested on producing allegedly accurate depictions of all communities, particularly nations. Though this sounded appealing in theory, it meant that filmmakers had to address how these ambiguous notions actually appeared, which raised some important questions: What did a nation look like? Was there any such construct as national or cultural authenticity? How could one photograph a people's "true"

[21] "The First Call," *Movie Makers*, April 1942, 143.
[22] Roy W. Winton, "Urgent: Where Have You Filmed," *Movie Makers*, April 1942, 150-151.

nature? Films like *Ravished Armenia* and *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* made clear how Americans hotly debated the politics of picturing societies and cultures. By depicting Turks and Germans as violent barbarians, they exposed the limits of internationalist thought after World War I—a time when increasing global integration made national borders more fluid and created new communities that challenged the permanence of the nation-state.

In the pursuit of international understanding, adherents to the Pax Cinemana struggled to promote the global village while simultaneously reaffirming what it meant to be American, Italian, French, German, or English. Internationalism acknowledged the world's diversity but still operated under the assumption that all peoples were entitled to self-determination and the ability to shape the destiny of their own cohesive nation-state. The formation of the Axis and Allied powers, however, demonstrated how popular understandings of national survival hinged on the belief that the other side must be defeated. All belligerent states framed themselves as warriors for self-determination but also insisted that their vision for the international order was inherently incompatible with that of the enemy. Popular peacekeeping efforts did little to navigate the pitfalls of this assumption and therefore could not prevent the outbreak of war.

The widespread questioning of international institutions and ideals also forced many to reconsider the benefits of technology, including cinema. World War II was a demonstration of technological might, and victory belonged to the most militarized, mobilized nation. As the global arms race intensified, governments turned to their respective film industries for support. In the United States, Hollywood manufactured dozens of propaganda films that championed the Allies and vilified the Axis powers. Blockbusters like *Casablanca* (1942) and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944), directly and indirectly encouraged enlistment in the armed forces. Approximately ninety million Americans attended movie theaters every week and watched films

that celebrated the United States' unparalleled war machines. The State Department acknowledged cinema as powerful tool to build morale and showcase the military to the public. Many leading newspapers recognized that films were as significant to the war effort as munitions manufacturers.

For most Americans, the technological advancements that had occurred between the late nineteenth century and World War II represented sources for peace and prosperity. Proponents spoke of technological development as part of the "progress" of civilization. The Pax Cinemana emerged when America's obsession for technological innovation was at its apex. Adherents, like Woodrow Wilson, saw new technology as part of an emerging democratic and moral world. It thus created momentum for technological enthusiasm and innovation. World War II evolved into an opportunity for the United States once again to showcase its technological prowess and assure the triumph of democracy and liberalism over the forces of fascism and chauvinism.

The history of the Pax Cinemana offers excellent examples of how Americans coupled technology with international idealism. Seemingly, the Allied victory in World War II should have represented the triumph of this ideology and its restoration to the forefront of the foreign policy of the United States federal government. The Allied powers had crippled fascist aggression and the United States had enthusiastically solidified the United Nations as an international body for peace, a resurrection and improvement upon Wilson's League of Nations. Polls taken immediately after the war indicated that the majority of Americans embraced the United Nations and believed it should have greater responsibilities than those outlined in its covenant. Many even argued that it should serve as a formal world government. These trends reflected the fact that most Americans identified as "internationalist" and opposed any form of

isolation from Europe and Asia.[23] Ostensibly, the United States did indeed make "the world safe for democracy." However, the cost of victory was immense.

World War II proved far more destructive than its predecessor, largely due to advances in military technologies. The conflict raged for six years and claimed the lives of over sixty million people. Most historians today consider it the deadliest war in human history. Technological enthusiasm and international idealism waned considerably after the war. The optimism harbored by Wilson and many peace activists about the "natural" course of the future did not seem to apply to the conditions of the era after World War II. New anxieties emerged that challenged the notion that cinema was an unprecedented instrument for world peace.

Ironically, it was the use of new technologies to end the war that brought this discussion to the forefront. On August 6, 1945, Americans dropped the first atomic bomb, Little Boy, on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, followed three days later on August 9, 1945, by the explosion of the second atomic bomb, Fat Man, over Nagasaki. In Hiroshima, around 70,000 to 80,000 people, approximately thirty percent of the entire city's population, perished in the initial blast and ensuing firestorm. In Nagasaki, around 40,000 to 70,000 people died immediately, approximately twenty-three percent of the entire city's population. In addition, the bomb destroyed almost seventy percent of the buildings in each city. Within several months, upward of another 110,000 people died from radiation sickness, burns, and other injuries sustained during the attack. In both cities, the overwhelming majority of victims were civilians.[24]

The horrific bombing directly challenged the philosophical foundation of all idealists who had long professed that a better and more just world was within reach. For the supporters of

[23] William Lydgate, "My Country, Right or Left?,"*'47 Magazine: The Magazine of the Year,* March, 1947, 50.
[24] "U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey: The Effects of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, June 19, 1946." President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers. Available at: Trumanlibrary.org (accessed June 18, 2017).

the Pax Cinemana, as well as millions of others, the most pressing issue after the bombing was how to integrate old ways of thinking about international understanding with a weapon capable of bringing about such unprecedented levels of destruction. The optimism of American peace activists and filmmakers rested in their unyielding faith in their nation's moral management of technology. If the zenith of American innovation had manifested itself in the creation of an instrument literally capable of bringing about world destruction, then the line between good and evil, which had seemed so obvious in the 1920s and 1930s, demanded reevaluation. The United States had won the war, but the bomb had reduced the utopia envisioned by the liberal idealists to little more than a pipedream of a bygone era. William Lydgate, an editor for the Gallup Poll, described the national mood only one year after the dropping of the atomic bombs as "gloomy," insisting that "instead of idealistically supposing, as many did after 1918, that the world was safe for democracy, the nation today soberly realizes that you have to work to keep peace."[25]

In a public speech defending his decision to drop the bomb, President Harry Truman stated, "We tell ourselves that we have emerged from this war the most powerful nation in the world--the most powerful nation, perhaps, in all history. That is true, but not in the sense some of us believe it to be true."[26] The statement echoed the feelings of idealists following the war. Woodrow Wilson had predicted that it was only a matter of time before the United Sates, due to its cosmopolitan legacy and mechanical know-how, would emerge as the world's predominant moral compass and missionary for international understanding, which he had instilled with notions of democracy, free markets, and non-isolationist governments. However, it was the atomic bomb, the deadliest device ever assembled, which solidified the United States as the

[25] William Lydgate, "My Country, Right or Left?,"*'47 Magazine: The Magazine of the Year,* March, 1947, 50.
[26] Harry Truman, "Radio Report to the American People on the Potsdam Conference," 9 August 1945. Available at Millercenter.org (accessed July 29, 2017).

world's primary superpower; these were not exactly the conditions he and other liberal peace activists had envisioned.

The devastating effects of the atomic bomb brought the debate regarding the ethical use of technology to the forefront of global politics and shattered any remaining confidence in the idea that technological development inherently meant social progress. The atomic bomb made atomic diplomacy one of the most important issues of the twentieth century and still, to this day, the United Nations continues to wrestle with the politics of nuclear testing. In regard to the use of the bomb, most Americans initially sided with the views of Henry Truman, who stated:

> I realize the tragic significance of the atomic bomb. Its production and its use were not lightly undertaken by this Government. But we knew that our enemies were on the search for it. We know now how close they were to finding it. And we knew the disaster which would come to this Nation, and to all peace-loving nations, to all civilization, if they had found it first.[27]

Most Americans agreed that if any nation was to possess nuclear weapons they were glad it was the United States. But how long could the United States monopolize such a force? One of the principal questions in modern foreign relations revolves around the nuclear capabilities of nations. After World War II, many Americans continued to think that technology divided the future into irreconcilable trajectories of good and evil, and that the world needed the United States to ensure peace. However, after the introduction of atomic weapons into the global arms race, the possibility for world destruction seemed far more probable than the materialization of the Pax Cinemana's promise of international understanding and peace.

By midcentury, when the Soviet Union attained nuclear capabilities, the potential for global destruction seemed ever more certain. Anxiety about new technology eclipsed the optimism and enthusiasm so embraced by peacekeeping filmmakers in earlier times. As anxieties

[27] Ibid.

about the future increased, new movements emerged challenging the status quo. Realpolitik replaced idealism as the dominant form of statecraft, spurring the White House and the Kremlin to articulate the central tenets of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Presidents and policymakers in the Cold War spoke of containment and deterrence far more than world peace. Though some optimistic Americans bought into the State Department's "Atoms for Peace" propaganda, most found the looming threat of nuclear holocaust troublesome and were certain that proxy wars between the United States and the Soviet Union were inevitable.[28] When the Korean War erupted in 1950, for example, eighty percent of Americans expected another world war within the next five years.[29] Ten years later, when Americans were asked if the threat of nuclear war had any impact on their outlook on life, approximately one third of Americans claimed they felt a "general dread or fear." Eleven percent claimed they were struggling to plan for the future, while ten percent were not certain if they would even live to see the next day.[30]

These Cold War fears also inspired large-scale counter-culture movements that criticized "the system" and re-examined the roles of humans and machinery in pursuit of organic values as opposed to those of industrial society. Sigmund Freud's writings permeated the American mainstream and epitomized a new trend. They reduced the universal morality of man to animal instincts steered by subconscious, sexual desires. Freud's work had been popular among American intellectuals since the 1910s, but they found new audiences after World War II, distorting and undermining the idealists' notion that humans were inherently rational beings. Accordingly, as Americans lost faith in their technology and its implication for world peace, the

[28] The "Atoms for Peace" campaign stemmed from President Dwight Eisenhower's plan to educate Americans about the benefits and threats posed by nuclear energy,

[29] John Mueller, "Expectations of War During the Cold War," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 2, May, 1979, 304-305.

[30] Linda Lyons, "The Gallup Brain: Facing Fear in America," March 4, 2003. Available at: Gallup.com (accessed July 9, 2017).

status of cinema declined. In a climate infused with imminent destruction and Freudian ideals, the vision of building international empathy through filmmaking no longer seemed so respectable.

In the second half of the twentieth century, one would be hard pressed to find a leading figure in the film industry or in politics who genuinely believed that films could permanently end war. This is not to suggest, however, that Americans turned away from cinema. The movie screen remained a permanent staple of daily society and life, despite the advent of television. Hollywood worked routinely with the United Nations (UN), which shared the League of Nations' faith in cinema as a valuable tool, and developed an array of important diplomatic and educational programs. Unlike the League, however, the UN was never the subject of blockbuster releases designed to rally public support. Even though the UN continued the effort to champion international organization, education, and law, these subjects were no longer at the forefront of filmmaking. Peace films, by and large, had lost their appeal.

Audiences and activists favored works that reflected current realities. Heroic films about World War II became a standard for Hollywood studios and played a crucial role in securing the conflict's legacy as "the good war." Moreover, audiences acquired a taste for the uniquely cynical and dark features of film noir. Emerging as a distinct genre and style in the late 1940s, film noirs garnered widespread attention for their shadowy urban settings and stylized black-and-white imagery. They drew inspiration from the hard-boiled fiction of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, and usually focused upon disillusioned men struggling to find meaning in a cruel and indifferent world. Seminal film noirs, such as *The Big Sleep* (1946) and *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), depict the lives of nihilist private investigators who tangle with dangerous femme fatales and double-crossing cops. The reoccurring themes of anxiety and suspicion in such works

encouraged film historian Wheeler Winston Dixon to dub film noir as the "cinema of paranoia." One could apply the designation to most films of that era, including those intended for non-theatrical settings.

Paranoia and pessimism were natural extensions of the prevailing climate of opinion. The possibility of nuclear annihilation was a legitimate concern and played a significant role in shaping the tastes and expectations of the movie-going public. Will Hays acknowledged these developments when he decided to retire as the head of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) in 1945:

> The fast-moving years since 1945 have continued to bring home the fact that the motion picture is always the child of its own generation. Though it helps to shape popular thought, it is itself a storm center for the interplay of forces, mechanisms, and demands that are constantly changing.[31]

After leaving his official position, Hays worked as an affiliate of the MPPDA and helped his close friend J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, purge the film industry of alleged communist influence. Hays and Hoover were certain that if cinema was to continue to serve the moral interests of the United States and the world, then it had to be free of communists and communist sympathizers. Anti-communist hysteria swept throughout Hollywood and heavily influenced for the educational film business, which ballooned considerably after World War II. Inspired by the surge in McCarthyism, production houses released hundreds of educational films highlighting the dangers of communism and the benefits of American capitalism. By 1950, nearly every school in the country had access to an 8mm or 16mm projector, making it easier than ever to integrate films into the curriculum. In addition, the federal government sponsored dozens of civilian defense films to teach schoolchildren how to respond in case of a nuclear attack. Preparedness films like *Our Cities Must Fight* (1951) and

[31] Will H. Hays, *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 572.

Duck and Cover (1952) became ubiquitous throughout schools and workplaces, and incidentally fueled feelings of unease and anxiety. Even the silly exploits of Bert the Turtle, the animated protagonist in *Duck and Cover,* were not enough to mask the harsh reality of a Soviet strike.

Approximately one year after the death of Will Hays in 1954, MGM studios released a remake of *Peace on Earth*. Renamed *Goodwill to Men* (1955), this new version, directed by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, was nearly identical to its predecessor. Instead of squirrels, however, the main characters are mice and the story takes place inside a church rather than a private dwelling. After a choir of young mice sing a rendition of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," one of them asks the wise old choir director, "What are men?" The elderly mouse then details the last years of humankind, a race of creatures who were "always thinking up new ways to kill each other." The World War I-inspired imagery of *Peace on Earth* is replaced with scenes more reminiscent of World War II. Jet aircraft, grenade launchers, and missiles are included to demonstrate recent developments in military weaponry. "They built the bombs bigger and bigger," the old mouse tells his captivated audience, "and pretty soon they were blowing up whole cities." As the mouse speaks, the camera pans slowly across a blazing inferno that overwhelms a nameless metropolis. After conjuring the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he eerily addresses the escalating tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union: "Then each one of them built the biggest, most awfulest bomb ever." The image dissolves slowly into a single plane soaring casually over a blood red sky. The suspense builds while the mouse explains, "one of them was dropping the bomb over here, the other one was dropping the bomb over there." The silhouettes of two large cities flash quickly across the screen before being incinerated in an instant. The shockwave from each explosion grows and ultimately spreads across the entire planet. A dissonant orchestral drone reaches a crescendo before going

uncomfortably silent. The viewer is left with nothing but images of a gray, lunar-like landscape. "And that was the end of the last man on earth," the old mouse declares as if his words were a real-life premonition.

As a result of the emergence of Cold War nuclear anxieties, it is tempting to dismiss the peacekeeping efforts explored in this work as little more than naïve activism that accomplished nothing of long-term consequence. On the surface, this study seems to detail one failure after another: the Peace Ship did not bring an end to World War I, *Ravished Armenia* did not establish a precedent for prosecuting genocide, *Whom the Gods Would Destroy* did not secure the United States' membership in the League of Nations, and the IECI and the ACL did not uphold their commitment to pacifism. However, such a cynical reading of these efforts would support a shallow and counterproductive interpretation of peace as a fixed status, rather than a process that requires continuous negotiation. The pessimism of the Cold War era has shrouded the tangible contributions cinema made to the establishment of international business, law, education, and organization between 1914 and 1939. Acknowledging these attempts sheds new light on the practical benefits of idealism and the respectable notion that a warless world is worth pursuing.

Appendix

Figure 1. Will H. Hays, circa 1919.

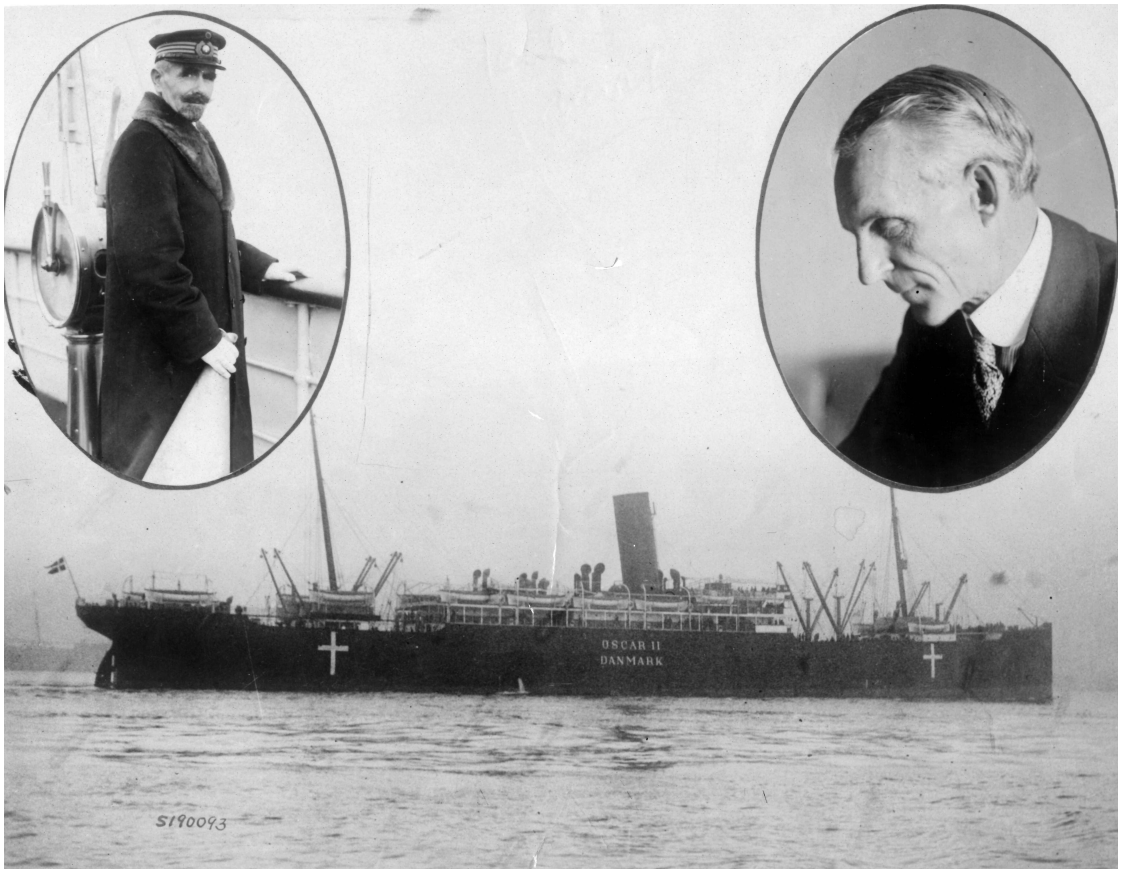


Figure 2. Photograph of the Oscar II (i.e. the Peace Ship), circa 1915. Captain G.W. Hempel is on the left and Henry Ford is on the right.

Figure 3. Political cartoon mocking Ford and the Peace Ship. Note the two newsreel cinematographers pictured on the right. Source: Raven Hill, "Tug of Peace," *Punch* magazine, December 15, 1915.

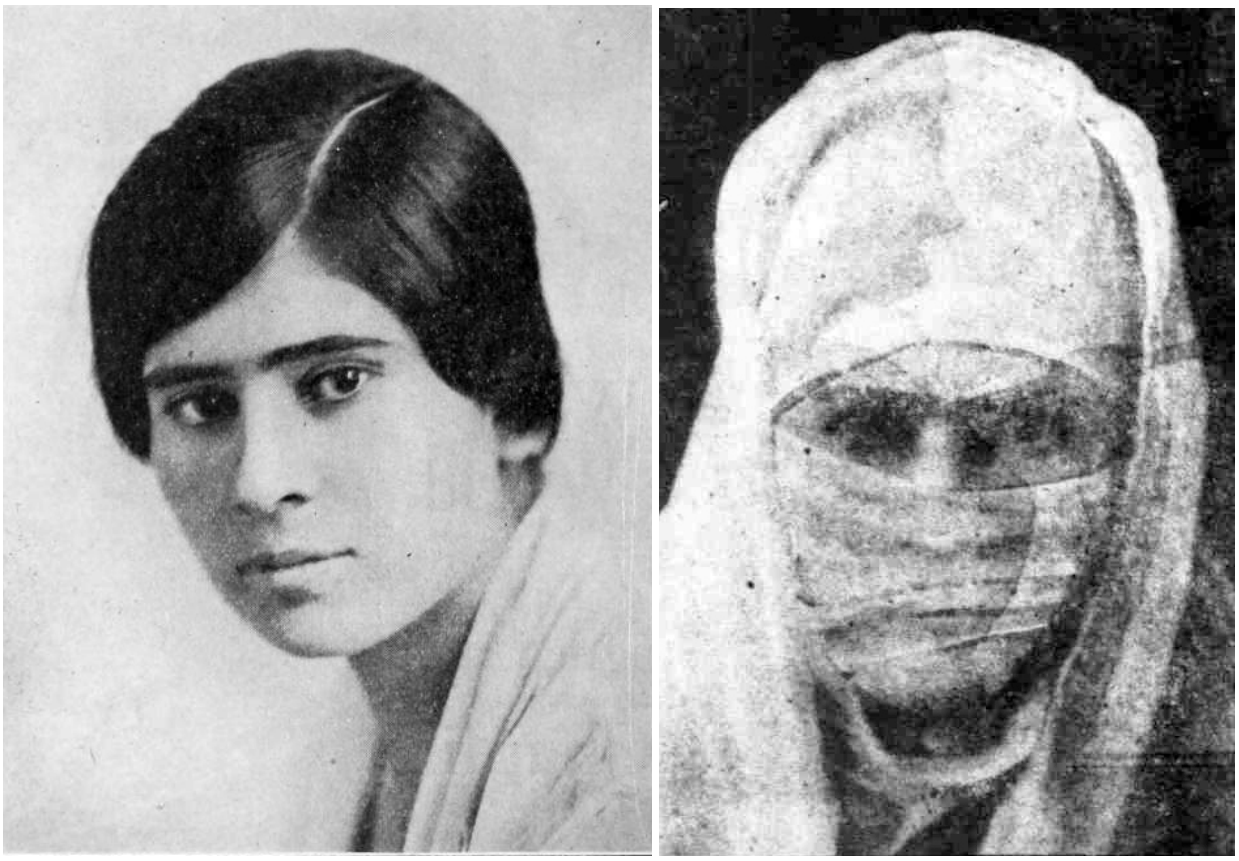


Figure 4. Left: Aurora Mardiganian, circa 1919. Right: Aurora Mardiganian wearing a Turkish *yashmak,* circa 1919. On more than one occasion, Mardiganian used the veil to conceal her identity from Ottoman officials.

Figure 5. Magazine advertisement for *Ravished Armenia*, 1919.

Figure 6. Illustration on the left appeared on the *Ravished Armenia* film poster. The inspiration from Emmanuel Fremiet's 1887 "Gorilla Carrying off a Woman" sculpture is clear. Photo source: Krannert Art Museum, available at: frenchsculpture.org, a project by Laure de Margerie, funded by the University of Texas at Dallas, the Nasher Sculpture Center, the Insitut national d'histoire de l'art, the Musee d'Orsay, the Musee Rodin, and the Ecole du Louvre.

Figure 7. Advertisement stressing the "CHRISTIAN WOMEN" found in slave markets.

Figure 8. Poster made by Douglas Volk in 1918 for the American Committee for Relief in the Near East.
Figure 9. Promotional using the film's alternate title, "Auction of Souls." The illustration reflects the film's capacity to combine torture and sex appeal.

Figure 10. On the outskirts of Guelik, Kurds crucify a dozen young Armenian women.
Figure 11. Before succumbing to death, a young woman's lips move quietly in prayer.


Figure 12. Disarmed Armenian soldiers dig their own graves.
Figure 13. A wide-shot crowded with refugees reveals the death marches through the desert.


Figure 14. A blade penetrates an Armenian woman during the vicious "game of swords."
Figure 15. A priest is burned alive with many others inside a local church.


Figure 16. The official deportation notice is read and posted.
Figure 17. A gendarme shouts at a crowd before stabbing a religious leader to death.

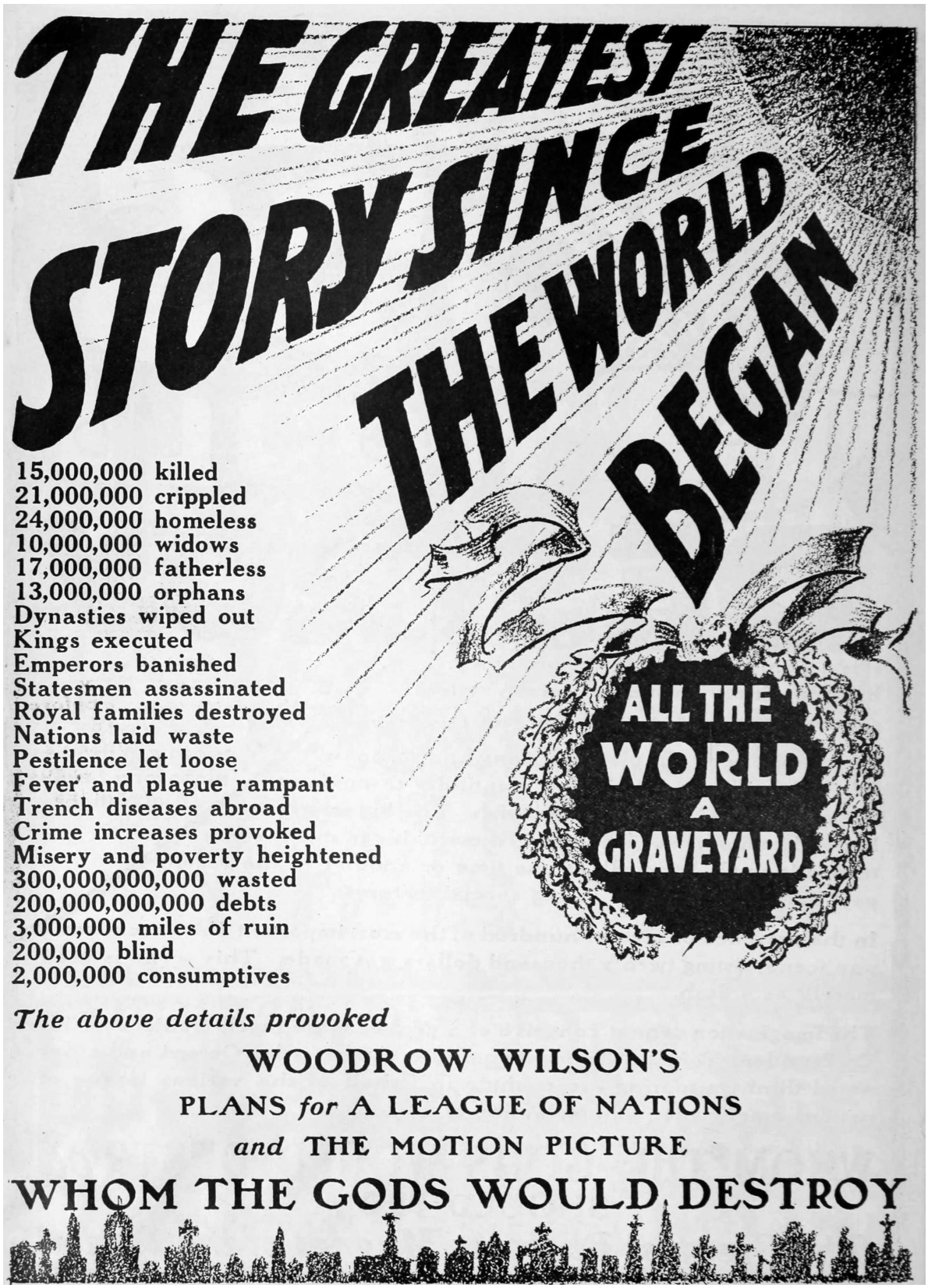


Figure 18. Promotional flyer for *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, 1919.

Figure 19. Promotional flyer for *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, 1919.

Figure 20. Promotional flyer for *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, 1919.

Figure 21. Advertisement for *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, 1919.

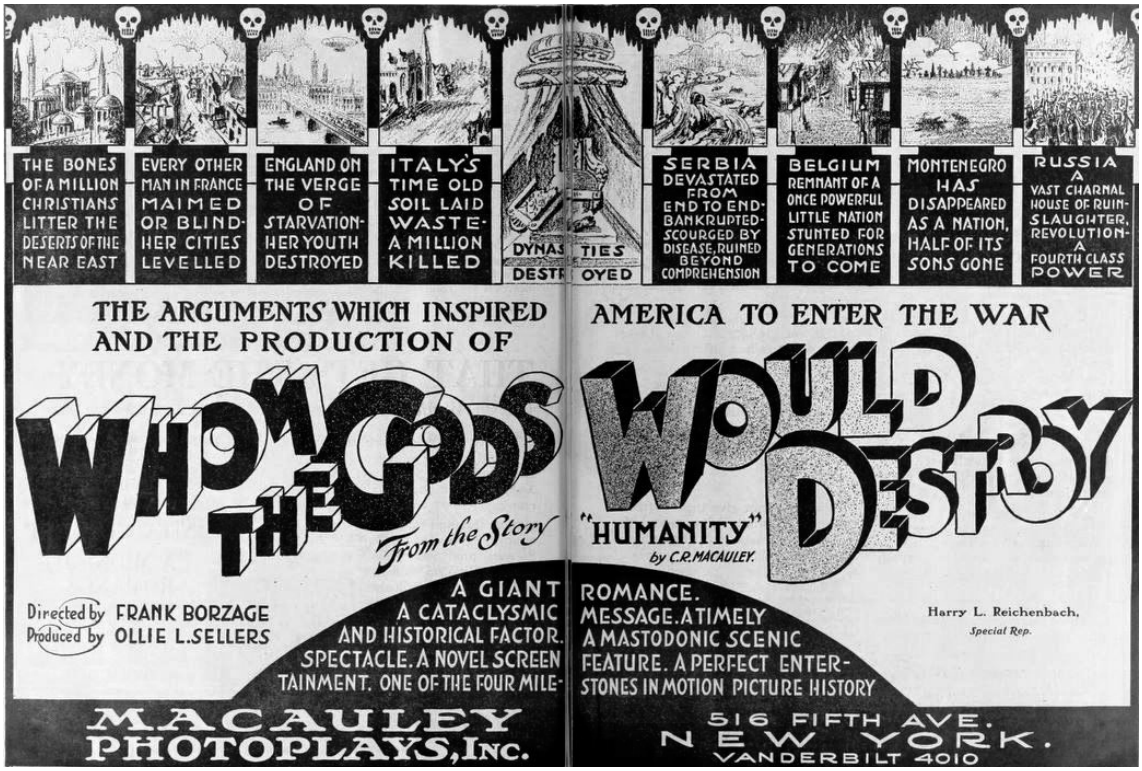


Figure 22. Advertisement for *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, 1919.

Figure 23. Production still from *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, 1919.

Figure 24. Production still from *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*, 1919.

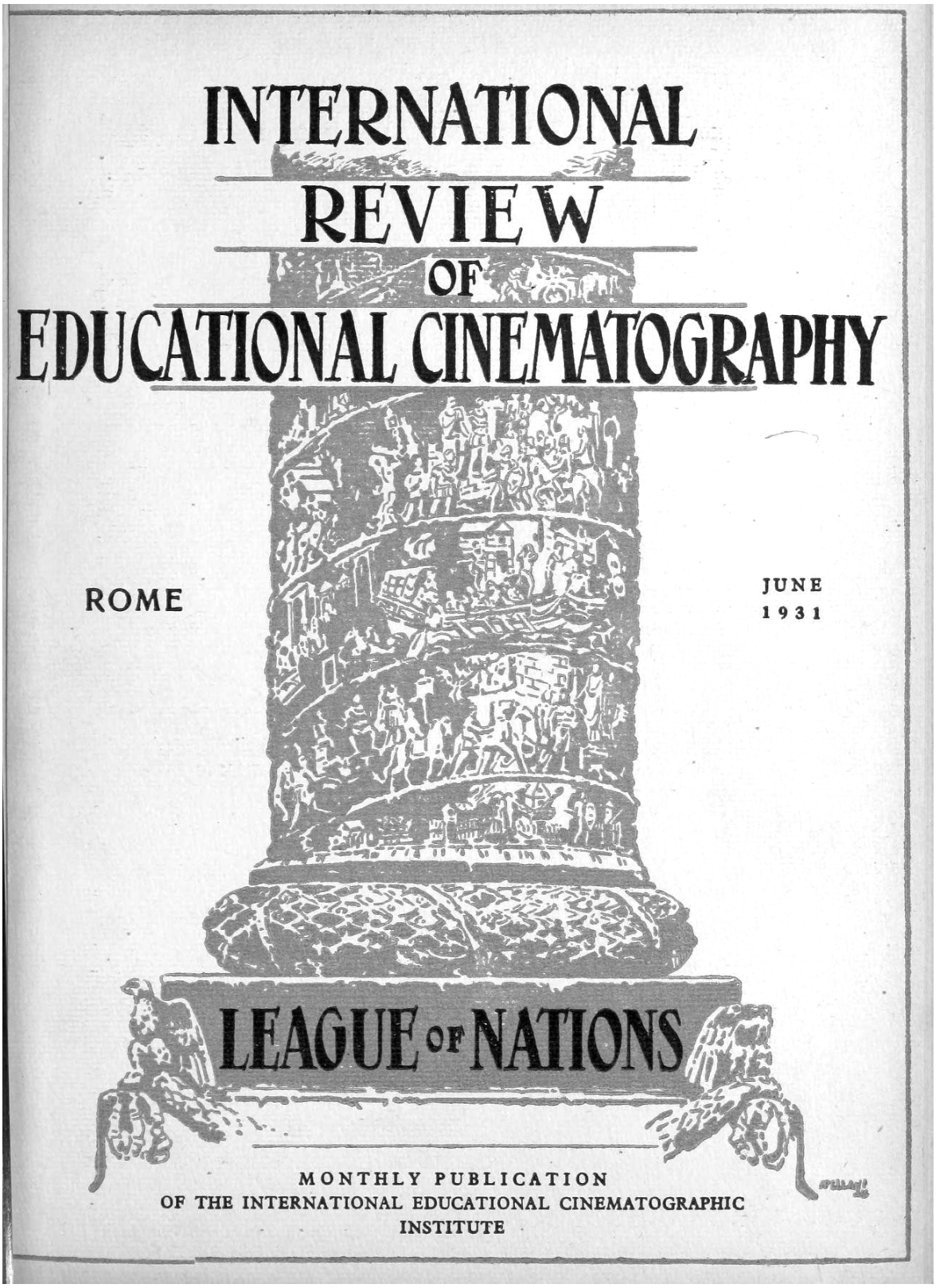


Figure 25. Trajan's Column featured on the cover of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute's official publication, June 1931.

Figure 26. Luncheon celebrating the birth of the Amateur Cinema League, July 28, 1926, New York Hotel Biltmore, Manhattan.

Figure 27. Hiram Percy Maxim, official ACL photograph, circa 1927.

Figure 28. Official ACL film leader. Still from *Manhattan and Picnic* (Philip Medicus, c. 1929).

Bibliography

Newspapers and Periodicals

Advocate of Peace (Washington D.C.)
Berkeley Daily Gazette
Billboard (Cincinnati, OH)
Bioscope (London, United Kingdom)
Business Screen (Chicago, IL)
Camera! (Los Angeles, CA)
The Chicago Daily Tribune
Cinema Progress (Los Angeles, CA)
The Clinton Weekly Age (Clinton, Iowa)
Close Up (Territet, Switzerland)
The Daily Mail and Empire (Toronto, Canada)
The Day (New London, CT)
The Day Book (Chicago, IL)
The Deseret News (Salt Lake City, UT)
The Detroit Free Press
Educational Film Magazine (New York, NY)
The Educational Screen (Chicago, IL)
Evening Public Ledger (Philadelphia, PA)
The Evening World (New York, NY)
Exhibitors Daily Review (New York, NY)
Exhibitors Herald (Chicago, IL)
The Film Daily (New York, NY)
The Gazette Times (Corvallis, OR)
The Glasgow Courier
Harrisburg Telegraph
The Independent (New York, NY)
The Indianapolis News
International Review of Educational Cinematography (Rome, Italy)
The League Bulletin (New York, NY)
Lewiston Evening Journal
The Literary Digest (New York, NY)
The Milwaukee Sentinel
The Modern Screen (New York, NY)
Motion Picture Daily (New York, NY)
Motion Picture Magazine (New York, NY)
Motography (New York, NY)
Motion Picture News (New York, NY)
Movie Makers (New York, NY)
Moving Picture Age (Chicago, IL)
Motion Picture Herald (New York, NY)
Moving Picture Weekly (New York, NY)
Moving Picture World (New York, NY)

New York Clipper
The New York Times
The Nickelodeon (Chicago, IL)
Photoplay (Chicago, IL)
Picture-Play Magazine (New York, NY)
The Pittsburg Press
The Polk County News (Benton, TN)
Prescott Evening Courier
Reel and Slide (Chicago, IL)
Screenland (Los Angeles, CA)
The Southeast Missourian
Spokane Daily Chronicle
The Sunday Morning Star (Wilmington, DE)
The Sydney Mail
The Toronto World
Variety (New York, NY)
Visual Education (Chicago, IL*)*
The World Court (New York, NY)

Published Works

Acland, Charles and Haidee Wasson, ed. *Useful Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

Adas, Michael. *Machines as the Measure of Men.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Adler, Selig. *The Uncertain Giant: 1921-1941, American Foreign Policy Between the Wars.* New York: Macmillan Company, 1965.

----------. *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-Century Reaction.* New York: Abelard Schuman, 1957.

Afra, Kia. *The Hollywood Trust: Trade Associations and the Rise of the Studio System.* London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

Aldrich, Mark. *Safety First: Technology, Labor, and Business in the Building of American Work Safety*, 1870-1939. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997.

Allen, Fredrick Lewis. *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s.* New York: HarperCollins, 2000. Reprint of 1931 original.

Amateur Cinema League. *The ACL Movie Book: A Guide to Making Better Movies.* New York: Amateur Cinema League, 1940.

Ambrosius, Lloyd E. *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* New York: Verso, 2006.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2006.

Archer, Jules. *World Citizen Woodrow Wilson.* New York: Julian Messner, 1967.

Archibugi, Danielle. "Cosmopolitan Democracy and its Critics: A Review," *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 10, No. 3, 2004, 437-473.

Balakian, Peter. *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003.

Balio, Tino. *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise.* New York: Scribner's Sons, 1993.

Barclay, Hartley. *Ford Production Methods.* New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1936.

Barme, Scot. *Love, Sex, and Popular Culture in Thailand.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002.

Barsam, Richard. *The Vision of Robert Flaherty: The Artist As Myth and Filmmaker.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

Barton, Bruce. *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus*. Indianapolis: Bobs-Merrill Company, 1925.

Bass, Gary Jonathan. *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and the Holocaust.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Berman, Marshall. *All that is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

Bingen, Steven. *Warner Bros.: Hollywood's Ultimate Backlot.* Lanham: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2014.

Boli, John and George M. Thomas. *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1875*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Brakhage, Stan. "In Defense of Amateur," first written in 1971; reprinted in *Essential Brakhage: Selected Writings on Film-Making.* New York: Documentex, 2001.

Brinkley, Alan. *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Burgess, Jean and Joshua Green. *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009.

Calhoun, Craig, *Habermas and the Public Sphere.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993.

Ceadel, Martin. *Thinking About Peace and War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Chambers II, John Whiteclay. *The Eagle and the Dove: The American Peace Movement and the United States Foreign Policy, 1900-1922.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991.

----------. "The Movies and the Antiwar Debate in America, 1930-1941," *Film & History,* Vol. 36.1, 2006.

Chatfield, Charles. *The American Peace Movement: Ideals and Activism*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1992.

Clavin, Patricia. *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

----------. "Defining Transnationalism," Contemporary European History, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2005.

Cooper, John Milton Jr. *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Cortright, David. *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Craven, Ian. *Movies on Home Ground: Explorations in Amateur Cinema.* Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.

Dadrian, Vahakn N. *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*. Providence: Berghahn Books, 2003.

DeBauche, Leslie Midkiff. *Reel Patriotism: The Movies and World War I.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.

De Grazia, Victoria. *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th Century Europe.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Deleuze, Gilles, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image.* Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1989.

Deren, Maya. “Aamteur Versus Professional,” *Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film.* New York: Documentex, 2005.

Diggins, John Patrick. *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America.* Princeton: Pricneton University Press, 1972.

Donaldson, Leonard. *The Cinematograph and Natural Science*. London: Ganes Limited, 1912.

Druick, Zoe. “The International Educational Cinematograph Institute, Reactionary Modernism, and the Formation of Film Studies,” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies,* Vol. 16, No. 1, 2007.

Dumenil, Lynn. *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1995.

Dumont, Herve. *Frank Borzage: The Life and Films of a Hollywood Romantic.* Jefferson: McFarland, 2009.

Dunbar, Willis and George May. *Michigan: A History of the Wolverine States.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.

Durkheim, Emile. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology.* New York: American Book-Knickerbocker Press, 1951. Reprint of the 1897 original.

Ekstein, Modris. *The Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

Eyman, Scott. *Lion of Hollywood: The Life and Legend of Louis B. Mayer.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005.

Faulkner, Richard. *Pershing’s Crusaders: The American Soldier in World War I.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2017.

Felman, Shoshana. *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Ferrara, Federico. “The Legend of King Prajadhipok: Tall Tales and Stubborn Facts on the Seventh Reign in Siam,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* Vol. 43, No. 1, 2012.

Fielding, Raymond, ed. *A Technological History of Motion Pictures and Television.* Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967.

Filene, Edward. *Successful Living in this Machine Age.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931.

----------. *The Way Out: A Forecast of Coming Changes in American Business and Industry.* Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1925.

Ford, Henry and Samuel Crowther. *My Life and Work.* (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923.

----------. *The International Jew.* Dearborn: Dearborn Publishing Company, 1920.

Fox, Broderick, ed. "Rethinking the Amateur: Acts of Media Production in the Digital Age," *Spectator 24:1,* 2004.

Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Gabler, Neil. *An Empire of the Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood.* New York: Anchor Books, 1989.

Gale, Arthur and Russell Holslag. *Making Better Movies.* New York: Amateur Cinema League, 1932.

Gerwarth, Robert, ed. *Twisted Paths: Europe, 1914-1945.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Glover, Jonathan. *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 200.

Gomrey, Douglas. *The Hollywood Studio System: A History*. London: British Film Institute, 2005.

Gorman, Daniel. *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Graves, Robert. *Good-bye to All That.* New York: Anchor Books, 1998. Reprint of 1929 original.

Halliday, Fred. "Three Concepts of Internationalism," *International Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 2, 1988.

Hannerz, Ulf. "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture," *Theory Culture Society,* Vol. 7, 1990.

Hays, Will. *The Memoirs of Will H. Hays.* Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1955.

Headrick, Daniel, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Hediger, Vinzenz and Patrick Vonderau, ed. *Films that Work: Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009.

Hilberg, Raul. *The Destruction of the European Jews.* Teaneck, NJ: Holmes & Meier, 1985.

Hounshell, David. *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932: The Development of Manufacturing Technology in the United States*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984.

Hovannisian, Richard G. *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Hughes, Thomas P. *American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970.* New York: Viking Penguin, 1989.

----------. *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Hunt, Lynn. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Iriye, Akira. *Cultural Internationalism and World Order.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997.

----------. *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.

Isenberg, Michael. *War on Film: The American Cinema and World War I, 1914-1941.* Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981.

Ishizuka, Karen and Patricia Zimmerman. *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories.* Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008.

Jacobson, Brian. *Studios Before the System: Architecture, Technology, and the Emergence of Cinematic Space.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

Jones, Robert Alun. *Emile Durkheim: An Introduction to Four Major Works*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1986.

Jowett, Garth, Ian Jarvie, and Kathryn Fuller. *Children and the Movies: Media Influence and the Payne Fund Controversy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Kattelle, Alan D. ""The Amateur Cinema League and its Films," *The Journal of Film History,* Vol. 15, No. 2, Small-Gauge and Amateur Film, 2003.

----------. *Home Movies: A History of the American Industry, 1897-1979.* Nashua, NH: Transition Publishing, 2000.

Kaufmann, Eric. "The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in the 20th-Century West: A Comparative-Historical Perspective on the United States and European Union," *Global Society,* Vol.

17, No. 4, 2003.

Keen, Andrew. *The Cult of the Amateur: How blogs, MySpace, YouTube, and the Rest of Today's User-Generated Media are Destroying our Economy, our Culture, and our Values.* New York: Doubleday, 2008.

Kelly, Andrew. *Cinema and the Great War.* London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Kendall, Tim, ed. *Poetry of the First World War: An Anthology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Knock, Thomas. *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Kraft, Barbara. *The Peace Ship: Henry Ford's Pacifist Adventure in the First World War.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1978.

Kraft, James. *Stage to Studio: Musicians and the Sound Revolution, 1890-1950*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Laqua, Daniel. *Internationalism Reconfigured.* New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

----------. "Transnational Intellectual Cooperation, the League of Nations, and the Problem of Order," *Journal of Global History*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2011.

Levin, Lawrence. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

----------. *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Lochner, Louis. *Henry Ford: America's Don Quixote.* New York: International Publishers, 1925.

Lubin, David. *Grand Illusions: American Art and the First World War.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Lynch, Cecilia. *Beyond Appeasement: Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Macauley, Charles. *Humanity: A Drama in Four Acts*. New York: The Motion Picture Forum, 1917.

Macmillan, Margaret. *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World*. New York: Random House, 2003.

Maier, Charles S. *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors.* Cambridge:

Harvard University Press, 2007.

Marchand, Roland. *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998.

----------. *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.

Marks, Sally. *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe, 1918-1933.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2003.

Marx, Karl and Robert C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx Engels Reader*. New York: Norton & Company, 1975.

Maxim, Hiram Percy. *Horseless Carriage Days*. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1962. Reprint of original 1936 edition.

----------. *Life's Place in the Cosmos* . New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1933.

McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994. Reprint of 1964 original.

Mendlovitz, Saul H. ed. *On the Creation of a Just World Order: Preferred Worlds for the 1990s.* New York: The Free Press, 1975.

Meyer, G.J. *The World Remade: America in World War I.* New York: Bantam, 2016.

Millard, Andre. *Edison and the Business of Innovation*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Moyn, Samuel. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Musser, Charles. *Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S. Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.

----------. *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994.

Neiberg, Michael. *Fighting the Great War: A Global History.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.

----------. *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Ninkovich, Frank. *Global Dawn: The Cultural Foundation of American Internationalism, 1865-1890.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009

----------. *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Orgeron, Devin, Marsha Orgeron, and Dan Streible, ed. *Learning with the Lights Off: Educational Film in the United States.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Owen, Wilfred and C. Day Lewis, ed. *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen.* New York: New Directions Books, 1965.

Paris, Michael, ed. *The First World War and Popular Cinema.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Passos, John Dos. *Mr. Wilson's War: From the Assassination of McKinley to the Defeat of the League of Nations*. New York: Doubleday. Reprint of the 1962 original.

Pedersen, Susan. *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Peterson, Ruth and L.L. Thurstone. *Motion Pictures and the Social Attitudes of Children*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933.

Ponsonby, Arthur. *Falsehood in War-Time: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated throughout the Nations during the Great War*. London: Garland Publishing Company, 1928.

Powdermaker, Hortense. *Hollywood the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951.

Power, Samantha. *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide.* New York: Basic Books, 2002.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* New York: Routledge, 1992.

Reichenbach, Harry. *Phantom Fame: The Anatomy of Ballyhoo.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931

Rees, A.L. *A History of Experimental Film and Video.* London: British Film Institute, 2008.

Rieger, Bernhard. *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Rollins, Peter and John O'Connor, ed. *Hollywood's World War I: Motion Picture Images.*

Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997.
----------. *Hollywood's White House: The American Presidency in Film and History*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2003.

Roosevelt, Theodore and William Harbaugh, ed. *The Writings of Theodore Roosevelt.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1997. Reprint of 1917 original.

Rosenberg, Emily, ed. *A World Connecting: 1870-1945.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Rosenheimer Jr., Arthur. "A Survey of Film Periodicals, I: The United States and England," *Hollywood Quarterly,* Vol.2, No.4, 1947.

Rossell, Deac. *Living Pictures: The Origins of the Movies.* New York: State University of New York Press, 1998.

Ruoff, Jeffrey, *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Salvato, Nick. "Out of Hand: YouTube Amateurs and Professionals," *TDR: The Drama Review,* Vol. 53, No. 3, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.

Seabury, William. *Motion Picture Problems: The Cinema and the League of Nations*. New York: Avondale Press, 1929.

Schabas, William. *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Schatz, Thomas. *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.

Schumacher, Alice Clink. *Hiram Percy Maxim*. Cortez, CO: Electric Radio Press, 1998.

Shapiro, Michael, *Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject.* New York: Routledge, 2004.

----------. *War Crimes, Atrocity, and Justice*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015.

Sitney, P. Adams. *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Sklar, Robert. *Movie Made America*. Revised Edition. New York: Vintage, 1994.

---------. *Film: An International History of the Medium.* Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001.

Slide, Anthony. *Ravished Armenia and the Story of Aurora Mardiganian*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014.

Sluga, Glenda. *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

----------. *The Nation, Psychology, and International Politics, 1870-1919.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

---------- and Patricia Clavin, ed. *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

---------- and Julia Horne. "Cosmopolitanism: Its Pasts and Practices," *Journal of World History,* Vol. 21, No. 3, 2010.

Smith, Anthony, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Spengler, Oswald. *The Decline of the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. Reprint of original 1926 edition.

Stebbins, Robert A. *Amateurs, Professionals, and Serious Leisure.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.

----------. "Casual leisure: A Conceptual Statement," *Leisure Studies*, 1997. University of Brighton, Eastbourne, UK

----------. "The Amateur: Two Sociological Definitions," *The Pacific Sociological Review,* Vol. 20, No.4, 1977.

Steigerwald, David. *Wilsonian Idealism in America.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Steiner, Zara. *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919-1933.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

----------. *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History, 1933-1939.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Swanson, Dwight. "Inventing Amateur Film: Marion Norris Gleason, Eastman Kodak and the Rochester Scene, 1921-1932," *Film History,* Vol. 15, No. 2, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

Tepperman, Charles Edwin. "Communicating a New Form of Knowledge: Tracing the Amateur Cinema League and its Films." PhD Dissertation: University of Chicago, 2007.

Tooze, Adam. *The Deluge: The Great War, America and the Remaking of the Global Order,* 1916-1931. New York: Penguin Books, 2014.

Traxel, David. *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and the Great War, 1898-1920.*

New York: Vintage Books, 2007.

Trumpbour, John. *Selling Hollywood to the World: US and European Struggles for Mastery of the Global Film Industry, 1920-1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Virilio, Paul. *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception.* London and New York: Verso, 1989.

Watts, Steven. *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*. New York: Vintage Books, 2005.

White, Lyman Cromwell. *International Non-Governmental Organizations: Their Purposes, Methods, and Accomplishments.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1951.

White, Matthew. *The Great Big Book of Horrible Things: The Definitive Chronicle of History's 100 Worst Atrocities.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011.

Williams, William Appleman. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. Reprint of the 1959 original.

Wilson, Woodrow. *Addresses of President Wilson*. Washington D.C.: Washington Government Printing Office, 1919.

Winter, Jay. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

----------. *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century*. Ann Arbor: Sheridan Books, 2006.

Yeghiayan, Vartkes. *The Armenian Genocide and the Trials of the Young Turks.* La Verne: American Armenian International College Press, 1990.

Zile, Edward S. Van. *That Marvel—The Movie: A Glance at its Reckless Past, its Promising Present, and its Significant Future.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1923.

Zimmerman, Patricia. "Cartographies of Gender, Race, Nation and Empire in Amateur Film," *Film History,* Vol. 8, No. 1, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996.

----------. *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.